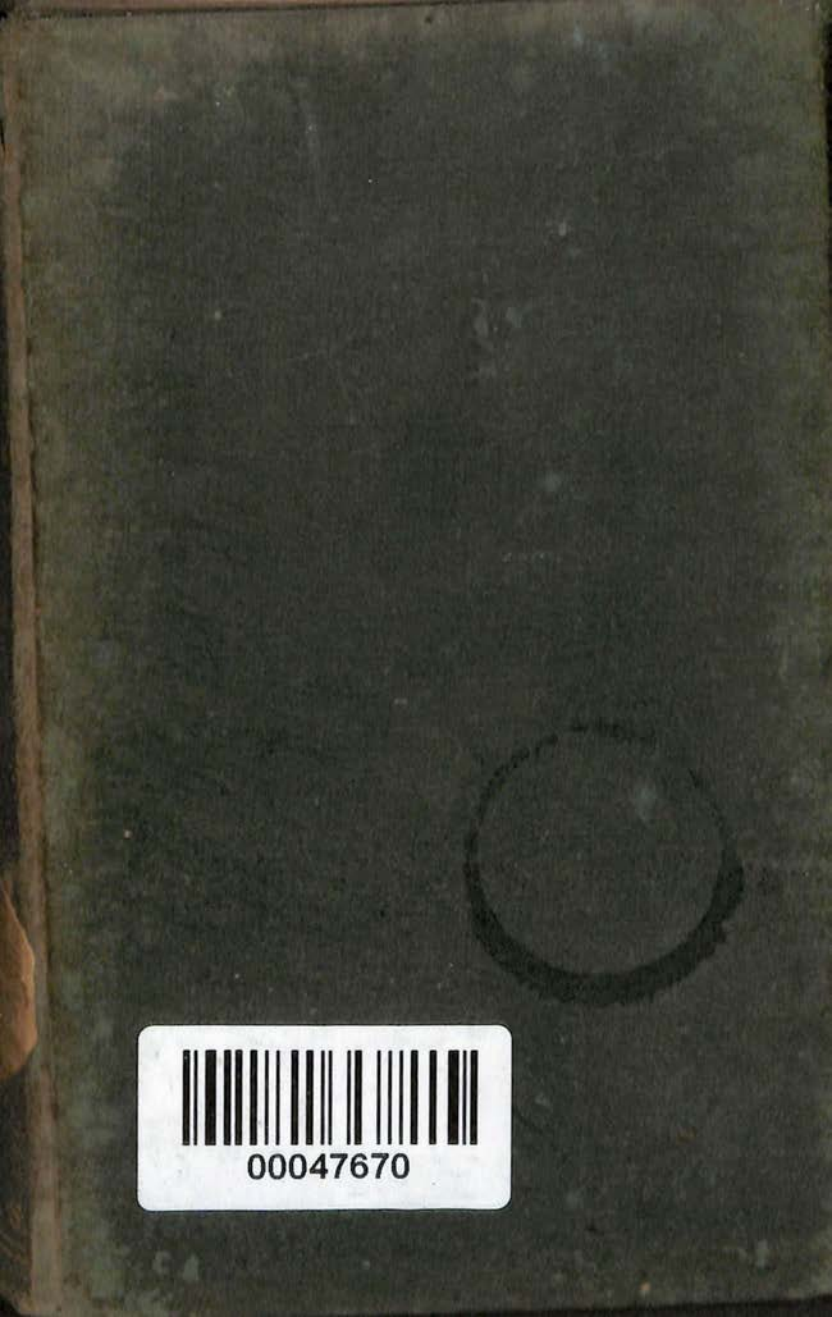
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LETTERS

OF

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

VOL. III.

Printed by S. Hamilton, Weybridge.

LETTERS

OF

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ

TO

HER DAUGHTER

AND

HER FRIENDS

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AN ENLARGED EDITION,

TRANSLATED FROM THE PARIS EDITION OF 1806.

IN NINE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. WALKER; W. OTRIDGE AND SON; WILKIE AND ROBINSON; WHITE AND COCHRANE; J. CUTHELL; CADELL AND DAVIES; LACKINGTON, ALLEN, AND CO.; LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN; J. RICHARDSON; BLACK, PARRY, AND KINGSBURY; J. MAWMAN; SHERWOOD, NEELY, AND JONES; GALE AND CURTIS; AND R. BALDWIN.

1811.

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LETTERS

OF

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ, &c.

[The Letters with an asterisk before the number are new Letters.]

LETTER CCLXXXIII.

TO MONSIEUR DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, January 15, 1674.

I ACKNOWLEDGE, my dear count, your natural politeness, and the goodness of your heart, which makes you sensible of all the tenderness of mine; I feel with pleasure the kindness of your letter; and believe me, it is not merely by way of return, that I protest to you I would willingly have made the consideration of my own happiness yield to the solidity of my daughter's arguments, had not the interest of your own affairs declared on the side of my inclination. You know M. de la Garde, and consequently can judge how unlikely he would be to put you both to inconvenience merely to indulge my wishes, had he not been more than ever convinced of the necessity of your taking this journey; you alone are the proper person to speak to the king on your own affairs. Madame de Grignan will find a way likewise to employ her abilities to the purpose, and if

you can bring the coadjutor with you, your troop will then be complete ; this is not my opinion only, but that of your friends in general. M. de Pomponne is of the number, and will be greatly rejoiced to see you all three. I have only to add, that I leave the management of the journey wholly to you: only let me give you a little hint, not to travel in your carriage along the banks of the Rhine, and to avoid a certain water about a league from Montelimart: this water is no other than the Rhone itself, which they obliged my carriage to pass through last year, and you cannot imagine how prettily my horses swam: for God's sake do not laugh at my precautions; prudence and foresight are the only means to make a journey safe.

Adieu, my dear count; I may hope then to have the inexpressible joy of embracing you soon; what do I not owe you for this favour? If I have a sincere friendship and the warmest affection for you, you know it is not the feeling of to-day.

LETTER CCLXXXIV.

TO MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, Jan. 19, 1674.

I SHOULD be extremely sorry, my child, if any of our couriers were to be drowned; they all bring you letters with leave of absence, which it is absolutely necessary you should receive. It is admirable in you to remember what I said about that same Durance: for my part, I never forget the least circumstance that relates to you: judge then if I remember Nova, and our Spaniard, and our Carthusians, and our Grignan songs, and a thousand other things.

You say you wish I could see the state of your heart

with regard to me: I am persuaded that I should be perfectly satisfied; and, not to spin out this subject to an immeasurable length, I shall only tell you, that I know you love me dearly; but it is cruel of you to receive with so much grief the mere trifles I now and then give my little *pigeons**, when you know that one of the play-things which the coadjutor has made them a present of, is worth all mine put together; so not a word more upon that subject, if you please, while I remain guardian, though it is very true that I am going to resign my office; but I am really afraid of your chicanery. M. de Grignan and you will find fault with every thing, and I know you are thinking of nothing at present but quarrelling with me; I am very well acquainted with you both: the *worthy* absolutely trembles at the thoughts of it, and though he fully expects to be ill used, is dying to see you here. I love that good creature from the very bottom of my soul, for all depends on him.

M. de la Garde is more confident than ever that you will do wonders by your presence, and is very desirous that the coadjutor should be of the party; it would be worthy of his friendship, and would complete what he began so well at Lambese: he has good friends, and is thought highly of; he can talk to ministers, is intrepid and fortunate; but I entered fully into all this the other day. We have made the speech among us, in which M. de Grignan is to address the king; it is in a style calculated to please his majesty, that is, mild and respectful; yours is to be a little more animated: in short, we took your different tones, and upon rehearsal found that it was just the thing.

* Madame de Sévigné means her grand-children here; and by her guardianship, the care of madame de Grignan's daughter that was left with her.

You know the prince is returned, and that all is at an end. I expect your brother every instant. I informed you of the robbery at St. Germain's chapel; it is asserted that the king knows the thief, and has put a stop to the search: that it was a man of quality, but not one belonging to the palace. The princess d'Harcourt dances at the ball, and will not miss even a country-dance; so you may judge of her devotion, which was only put on to get appointed lady of the palace. A few days ago she said, I am a heathen, compared with my sister d'Aumont; but now she says, My sister d'Aumont is continually dull and melancholy; she takes delight in nothing but burying the dead. She does not yet paint, but very submissively declares, that she is ready to do it whenever the queen or the prince d'Harcourt orders her to do it. But neither the queen nor the prince has been pleased to do it yet, and so, poor lady, she is forced to pinch her cheeks to give them a bloom: it is believed too, that M. de Sante Beuve will enter into that expedient. I would not mention these follies to any one but you; for, after all, the daughter of Brancas is sacred to me, and I beg you will not mention it again.

The balls are crowded with children; madame de Montespan is neglected there, but takes the highest place: she says mademoiselle de Rouvrai is already too old to dance at the ball; Mademoiselle, mademoiselle de Blois, the little de Piennes, mademoiselle de Roquelaure (rather too old, she is fifteen). Mademoiselle de Blois is a prodigy; the king and every one are delighted with her: she came to madame de Richelieu in the midst of the dancing, and said, "Madame, can you tell me whether the king is pleased with me or not?" She passed on to madame de Montespan, "Madame," said she, "you take no notice of your friends to-day:" in

short, with certain little things that come from her lovely mouth, she charms by her wit, so that every one thinks it impossible to surpass her. I beg pardon of my great Mademoiselle: God be praised, she dances no longer. The other children are not yet to be seen: madame de Scarron very little. I have had a charming conversation with the *Mist* *; she has risen as high as the *Thaw*, and perhaps higher; nothing can be of greater importance to you than the road by the *Mist*, who is sure to you; and from her great zeal and affection for you, she will be one of your instruments. The *Leaf* is the most frivolous and lightest merchandise you ever saw; he who governs the trunk of her tree, is going to replant it, that it may grow green again; but he wishes to be rid of the expense, and will not sow in unfruitful soil; the *Storm*, I think it is his real name, is more friendly towards you than you can imagine.

The abbé de Valbelle has just left us †. He told me, that yesterday at mass, his majesty, in a good-humoured way, gave his almoner a printed paper, by an unknown author, which has been handed about at St. Germain, in which the noblesse humbly request his majesty to correct the indecency of his clergy, who get together and chat and talk loud, and turn their backs to the altar, before his majesty comes into the chapel; and that he would be pleased to order them to behave with at least as much decency when God only is present, as after his majesty comes in. This address is extremely well drawn up: the priests are dreadfully enraged at

* The *Mist*, the *Thaw*, the *Leaf*, the *Storm*, are ciphers. It has been seen above, that the *Thaw* was madame de Scarron. The *Mist* is probably madame de la Fayette, and the *Leaf* madame de Coulanges, both friends of madame Scarron. The *Storm* is apparently the abbé Têtu.

† Louis Alphonse de Valbelle, almoner in ordinary to the king, afterwards made bishop of Alet, and from thence translated to the see of St. Omer.

it, especially those who used to take the opportunity of the king's absence to talk and abuse the musicians, to the great scandal of their cloth, and the church they belong to. He told me besides, that the archbishop of Rheims would denounce eternal enmity against the coadjutor, if he did not accompany you to Paris. What has been lately decided in Languedoc ought certainly to weigh with you above all considerations: this is a favourable time for you, and M. de Pomponne will always be on the side of justice, which is all you require in regard to your town-house.

The story of R**** is very diverting: the good bishop fretted, fumed, raged, and swore, and, after all, was obliged to make the first step towards you; and you were quite right to forgive what had passed.

R****, de tes conseils voila le juste fruit†.

Was not he the honest man who advised him ‡?

Corbinelli writes you an account of the triumph of the king's lieutenants: the judgement given in this case is the most exact rule for your affair; nothing in the world could happen at a more favourable juncture; but be sure you bring copies of what is entered in your registers, for they will be of service to you; mere words signify little, when we are called upon for proofs. Every one here admires your honesty in saying that with such base and low-minded people as those with whom you have to deal, nothing is gained by generosity.

I am yours most affectionately, my dear, and I embrace as many of the Grignans as happen to be round you.

† R****, such are the just fruits of thy advice.

‡ A person who was register to the states of Provence.

LETTER CCLXXXV.

FROM M. DE CORBINELLI TO MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Jan. 19, 1674.

The judgement given in favour of the king's commissioner in Languedoc against the bishops of that province, is an admirable precedent in your favour. Another victory, another triumph, another honour for us, and new vexation to our enemies; every thing will now go smoothly: and if we should chance at any time to lose a point in Provence, we shall recover it here: only come to us, and we will form such deep schemes of politics, as shall make our foes tremble. I do not know whether the marchioness, your mother, has given you a proper description of the ball at St. Germain, but this I know, that you will enliven every thing by your presence. I cannot sufficiently admire the affair of R****. If you had remembered my lessons, respecting country liberality, you would have promised him your protection, and then have gloriously gone from your word under some noble pretext: you quite forget all those fine maxims, and yet they are the safest in the world to follow. The king will certainly reproach you one day or other for this behaviour of yours; you absolutely sacrifice a whole province to your false notions of generosity: you might have said that you could not grant the favour with any safety to your conscience; but having granted it, could you not have found in all the mysteries of politics, one handsome device, to turn out this register? O, generous souls, unworthy to reign over those of Provence!

LETTER CCLXXXVI.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Monday, Jan. 22, 1674.

I DO not know, my dear child, whether the hope of seeing you soon, which expands my heart, gives me a peculiar propensity to joy and merriment, but I laughed most immoderately at what you wrote me about Pellisson*, and M. de Grignan. Corbinelli is enchanted with it, and whoever sees the passage will be fortunate. It is impossible to keep a thing up with greater humour, nor to resume it with greater skill, than you do in different parts of your letter. Believe me it is impossible to write more delightfully: the spirit of our correspondence can scarcely, I think, be equalled, and is a great comfort to me. You say too much of my letters; they are not to be compared with yours, and yet, see what an odd creature I am, I protest to you I earnestly wish to receive no more of them; and in saying this, let me tell you, I set no small value on your presence.

Your observation on the subject of the *Hail*, who speaks according to his wishes and views, without paying any attention either to truth or probability, is a very good one. I think for my own part there is nothing like being insolent: is it not extremely proper? I have always detested this style myself, but if it succeed, I must change my opinion. I shall insert the affair of your friend the assassinator, in my book of Ingratitude; I think it is a very curious incident: but what strikes me most, is the extreme delicacy of the gentleman, who,

* She alludes to the ugliness of Pellisson, who in this respect resembled M. de Grignan.

because he will not suffer any one to be in love with his mother, stabs his friend and benefactor. Your Provençals have strange consciences: that of the *Hail* (the bishop of Marseilles) is a miniature on the same plan; his scruples, his remissness, his proposals, his oppositions, augment and blacken the dose: he is an excellent counterpart of your villain.

But to change the subject. You are really coming then, my child! I shall have the joy of receiving you here once more, of embracing you, and giving you a thousand little marks of my affection. This hope spreads a mild influence of joy over my heart: I am sure you believe it, and are under no apprehension, lest I should send you back again.—I have been to-day to St. Germain; the ladies there talked much of your return. The countess de Guiche desired me to tell you, that she shall not write to you, since you will come and fetch your answer: she dined there, though in weeds; the queen wished it. I witnessed the ceremony. The king and queen ate in gloomy state. Madame de Richelieu * sits, and the other ladies sit, or stand, according to their rank: those who have not dined, are ready to rush upon the dishes, and those who have dined are sick with the smell, and suffocated with the steam of the meats: so that the whole party suffers. Madame de Crussol's head was dressed in the extremity of the fashion: she will on Wednesday appear in rubies, having taken all those of the duke, and madame de Meckelbourg. I supped last evening at Gourville's with this princess; madame de la Fayette, and M. de la Rochefoucault were there: we exhausted the subject of Germany, without excepting a single principality. Adieu, my dear child, I leave you, to chat with d'Hacqueville and

* Lady of honour to the queen.

Corbinelli: they make no ceremony of interrupting me now you are coming.

The king has given the situation of colonel-general of the Swiss guards, which M. de Soissons * held, to the count de Vexin †. M. de Louvois will act for him.

LETTER CCLXXXVII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, Jan. 26, 1674.

D'Hacqueville and La Garde still continue to wish for your arrival, as the thing in the world that will be of the greatest advantage to your affairs; come then, my dearest child, and by your presence change the face of every thing here; *se me mirus, me miran* ‡, this is most admirably applied: you must not set your sun-dial in the shade: your intendant will not leave Provence so soon as was imagined. He wrote to madame d'Harbigni, that you did him wrong, in thinking that justice alone engaged him in your interests, since your own beauty and merit had a great share in it.

There was not a creature at the ball last Wednesday. The king and queen had all the crown jewels on; but as ill fortune would have it, neither Monsieur nor Madame, nor Mademoiselle, nor mesdames de Soubise, Sully, d'Harcourt, Ventadour, Coëtquen, nor Grancey, could be present, on different accounts, which was a great pity. Their majesties seemed to be a good deal vexed at it.

* Eugene Maurice de Savoie, count de Soissons, died June the 7th, 1673.

† Louis César de Bourbon, born in 1672.

‡ An inscription for a sun-dial. "If you look on me, others will look on me," but *mirar* signifies to *admire* as well as to look upon.

I returned yesterday from Mêrci, where I went the day before to pay a visit to M. d'Andilli. I was near six hours with him, and enjoyed all the gratification that could be tasted in the conversation of so witty and excellent a man: I likewise saw my uncle de Sévigné*, but for a very short time. That Port Royal is a perfect Thebais †, a very paradise; a desert, where all that is left of true Christian devotion, is retired. The whole country for a league round, breathes the air of virtue and holiness. There are four or five hermits, whom no one knows, that live like the penitents of St. John Climachus ‡. The nuns are angels upon earth. Mademoiselle de Vertus is wearing out the remains of a miserable life there, in the most excruciating pain, but with inconceivable resignation. The very meanest of the inhabitants have a virtuous serenity in their countenances, and a modesty of deportment, to be met with in no other place. I own to you I was delighted to see this divine solitude of which I have heard so much; it is a frightful valley, calculated to inspire a taste for religion. I returned to Mêrci to sleep, and yesterday returned here after having embraced M. d'Andilli as I passed. I shall dine to-morrow with M. de Pomponne: he will talk of his father, and I of my daughter: these are the subjects we have most at heart. I am every day in expectation of your brother: he writes to me in the most affectionate manner. He set out sooner, and stays longer than the rest; we have a notion that this is occasioned by an attachment he has formed at Sesanne;

* M. de Andilli and M. de Sévigné had for many years lived a life of retirement at Port-Royal des Champs.

† A part of Egypt, bordering upon Ethiopia; the people of which were remarkable for the nature and simplicity of their manners.

‡ Remarkable for the austerity of their devotion.

but as it is not of a serious nature, I am not uneasy about it.

It is a fact that M. de Villars and his people were attacked in their return from Spain by the people of the Spanish ambassador, who was on his return to France. The dispute was ridiculous enough, the masters exposed themselves, and it went so far, that they drew upon each other: some of the servants lost their lives in the affray. Madame de Villars has received no congratulations on her husband's return, but she has got him, and that is all she wants. M. de Luxembourg is here; there is great talk of a peace, that is to say, we speak as we wish, rather than judge from the real state of affairs *: there is no harm, however, in wishing, be things how they may.

I hope, my dear child, you will be more at ease and more determined, when you have received your leave of absence. There is no doubt, but that your return will prove to your advantage; if you were not well here, you would feel the effects of it in Provence; *se me miras, me miran.* Nothing can be more applicable, I abide by that. Monsieur and madame de Coulanges, la Sanzei, and *the worthy*, all wish for you with impatience, and are all equally desirous with myself, that you should bring the coadjutor along with you. I have had many conferences with La Garde. You cannot set too high a value on his advice. He was mentioning your affairs to Gordes the other day, who is perfectly master of them, and gives an admirable turn to what is

* What can be said of a war begun with so much ardour, so much preparation, so many means, and of which in less than two years they were so weary and so disgusted? Yet this war terminated with the glorious treaty of Nimeguen, whose advantages served, unfortunately, the ambition and pride of Louis XIV.

necessary to be said to the king. You cannot consult any one who is better acquainted with this part of the world than himself.

Every one seems delighted with mademoiselle de Blois and the prince de Conti. D'Hacqueville will send you news of what is going on in Europe, and how great a figure England makes at present in the political world. The Swiss guards are at last given to the duke de Maine *, and not to M. de Vexin, as I told you in mine of the 22d, but in the room of it, he has the abbey of St. Germain des Prés.

LETTER CCLXXXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, January 29, 1674.

I REALLY think, my dear child, you ought to make more sure of your leave of absence than you seem to do. M. de Pomponne's note, which I sent you, is a sufficient confirmation of it. A man like him, would not have undertaken to ask for any thing that he was not sure of obtaining. You must have received it the day after you wrote to me, and ought to have been ready to set out immediately; you speak of several days, and that displeases me. You will have received many letters by the same post, and have taken advice from the fountain of good council, I mean the archbishop, concerning the manner in which you are to conduct your affairs. You will see that La Garde advises you to bring but few attendants with you; if you were to bring all those with you that wish to come, your journey to Paris

* Lewis-Augustus de Bourbon, the king's son by madame de Montespan, born the 31st of March, 1670.

would look like a voyage to Madagascar; you must act within bounds, and keep up the due decorum of the province.

I suppose M. de Grignan is gone to Marseilles and Toulon: it is now a year, this very month, since we were there together: and I imagine you think of me as you pass through Salons and the other places where you have seen me. One of my greatest misfortunes is, that the sight of places affects me beyond expression, by awakening the most painful recollections. I endeavour to hide from you and all the world, half the tenderness with which my heart overflows.

The new opera is very much frequented, but the other is considered the most pleasing. Baptiste thought he had surpassed it, but the wisest is sometimes mistaken. The lovers of music always find new charms in it: I believe I shall wait till you come, that we may see it together. The balls of St. Germain were sadly dull: the children want to go to bed at ten o'clock, and the king pays no attention to any thing but the carnival. He said at dinner, "When I give no entertainments, people complain, and when I do, they will not attend." He only danced the last time with madame de Crussol. M. de Crussol, who is a great wit, said, looking at his wife, who was painted redder than the rubies that ornamented her: "She is not handsome, gentlemen, but she has a fine face."

Your return is now the subject of conversation at court; you cannot imagine the compliments that are paid me upon the occasion. It is five years ago to-day, my dear child, that you were married.

LETTER CCLXXXIX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, February 2, 1674.

You speak of letters of the fifteenth, but do not mention those of the twelfth, which you expected with such impatience, and which brought your leave of absence; but as you take no notice of them, I take it for granted that you have received them.

You do not seem sufficiently to hasten your departure. Every one torments me to know whether you are upon the road, and when you will arrive; to all which I can give no satisfactory answer. I think you are still at Grignan, and will set out to-morrow or Monday. In short, my dear child, I think of nothing but you, and follow you every step you take. I thank you for the kind promise you have made me, of not exposing yourself in your carriage on the banks of the Rhône: but you say you intend to ford the Loire; you will know better than I can tell you, how to proceed when you get to Lyons: come safe, and in good health, and I desire nothing more. My heart is beyond expression delighted at the joyful prospect of seeing you soon. Let those go out to meet you that choose it; I shall wait for you in your own room, and shall be delighted to receive you: you will find a fire, candles, good elbow-chairs, and a heart which is not to be surpassed in affection. I shall embrace the count and the coadjutor, and bid them both heartily welcome.

The archbishop of Rheims has been to see me, and calls out for the coadjutor with might and main. Let me assure you, that you are greatly obliged to M. de Pomponne, for his good opinion of you, and the great

desire he expresses to see you. Your poor brother is just arrived; cardinal de Retz has this moment sent to inform me of it; make haste then, and come both together in a moment.

My dear child, I am all your own; I do not say so merely by way of concluding my letter, but as the most solemn truth in the world. Mademoiselle de Méri does not write to you; we begin to drop that sort of intercourse now, in the hope of a better. My son embraces you most affectionately, as I do all the dear Grignans.

LETTER CCXC.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, February 5, 1674.

It is many years ago, to-day, that there came into the world a creature destined to love you beyond every other thing in existence *. I beg you not to suffer your imagination to wander either to the right hand or to the left:—*Cet homme là, sire, c'étoit moi-même* †.

It was yesterday three years that I felt the most poignant grief of my whole life. You set out at that time for Provence, and you remain there still. My letter would be very long, if I attempted to express all the sorrow I then felt, and what I have since felt, in consequence of this separation. But to leave this melancholy digression. I have received no letters from you to-day: I know not whether I am to expect any, and I fear not, as it is so late: I have, however, expected them with impatience; I wanted to hear of your de-

* She refers to her birth-day, 5th February, 1626.

† A line of Marot in an epistle to Francis I. *This man, sire, was myself.*

parture from Aix, and to be able to compute, with some exactness, the time of your return. Every one teazes me, and I know not what to answer. I think but of you and your journey. If I receive any letters from you after this is sent away, you may make yourself perfectly easy; for I will certainly take care to do whatever you desire me.

I write to-day a little earlier than usual. M. Corbinelli, and mademoiselle de Méri, are here, and have dined with me. I am going to a little opera of Moliere's, that is to be sung at Jellison's. It is an excellent composition; the prince, the duke, and the duchess, will be there. I shall, perhaps, sup at Gourville's, with madame de la Fayette, the duke, madame de Thianges, and M. de Vivonne, of whom we are to take our leave, as he sets out from hence to-morrow. If this party is broken up, I shall, perhaps, go to madame de Chaulnes, where I am earnestly invited, as well by the mistress of the house, as by cardinals de Retz and Bouillon, who made me promise them. The first of these is very impatient to see you; he loves you dearly.

It was apprehended, that mademoiselle de Blois had the small-pox, but it does not prove so. There is not a word said of the news from England; this makes me conclude there is nothing good from thence. There has been only a ball or two at Paris during the whole carnival; there were masques at noon, but not many. It is a very dull season. The assemblies at St. Germain are mortifications for the king, and only show the falling off of the carnival.

Father Bourdaloüe preached a sermon on the purification of our Lady, which transported every body. There was such energy in his discourse as made the courtiers tremble. Never did preacher before enforce

with so much authority, and in so noble a manner, the great truths of the Gospel. His design was to show that every power ought to be subject to the law, from the example of our Lord, who was presented at the temple. This was insisted on with all the strength and clearness imaginable; and certain points were urged with a force worthy of St. Paul himself.

The archbishop of Rheims, as he returned yesterday from St. Germain, met with a curious adventure. He drove at his usual rate like a whirlwind. If he thinks himself a great man, his servants think him still greater. They passed through Nanterre, when they met a man on horseback, and in an insolent tone bid him clear the way. The poor man used his utmost endeavours to avoid the danger that threatened him, but his horse proved unmanageable. To make short of it, the coach and six turned them both topsy-turvy; but at the same time the coach too was completely overturned. In an instant the horse and the man, instead of amusing themselves with having their limbs broken, rose almost miraculously; the man remounted, and galloped away, and is galloping still for aught I know; while the servants, the archbishop's coachman, and the archbishop himself at the head of them, cried out, "Stop that villain, stop him, thrash him soundly." The rage of the archbishop was so great, that afterwards, in relating the adventure, he said, "if he could have caught the rascal, he would have broke all his bones, and cut off both his ears."

Adieu, my dear, delightful child, I cannot express my eagerness to see you. I shall direct this letter to Lyons; it is the third; the two first were to be left with the *chamarier*. You must be got thither by this time or never.

[*Madame de Grignan arrived at Paris a few days after the date of this letter, where she remained till the end of May*, 1675.]

LETTER * CCXCI.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

Paris, September 5, 1674.

YOUR physician, who says my disorder is the vapours, and you, who prescribe a remedy for them, are not the first who have advised me to use specifics†; but the reason which has prevented my taking any precaution against these vapours, will prevent me also from curing them. Your disinterestedness in giving me this advice, for which you wish me to praise you, is not so commendable as it would have been in the prime of our youth, when, perhaps, there would have been some merit in it. Be this as it may, I am in good health at present: if I die of this disease, it will be by no common sword; and I will appoint you to write my epitaph. What say you to our victories? I never hear of war without thinking of you. Your vacant situation struck a damp to my heart. You know by whom it is filled. Was not the marquis of Renel one of your friends and relations? When I see you at home in such times as these, I admire the king's good fortune in being able to dispense with the services of so many brave men, whom he leaves without employment.

My son has been slightly wounded in the head; it is a miracle that he is saved, as well as the four squadrons of the Maison du Roi, who were posted for eight

† Bussy wrote to her thus: "The remedy being in your hands, I cannot suppose you hate life sufficiently not to make use of it, nor that you can have greater repugnance to take a lover than an emetic."

successive hours within reach of the enemies' fire, without any other movement than pressing forward in proportion to the number of the slain. I have heard it is a dreadful state of suffering to be thus exposed. Your letters to the king always delight me.

FROM MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

I THANK you for having thought of, and pitied me during my mother's indisposition. I am pleased that you know how much my heart is interested in every thing that concerns her: this seems to be my greatest excellence, and I am very glad that you, whose esteem I value, are not ignorant of it. If I had any other essential good quality, I would draw my portrait † for you: but be content with this, and with my esteem for your merit, which is inseparable from indignation against Fortune for the injustice she has done you.

LETTER * CCXCII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, October 15, 1674.

IT seems to me that I do not write well; and if it were necessary for me to have a good opinion of my own letters, I should desire you to give me confidence by your approbation.

Your son, and the little canoness de Rabutin his sister, whom I very much love, have dined with me. Their name excites an interest in my heart, and their

† Not only were portraits of this kind very much in fashion, but it was even customary for persons to draw their own. Many of these portraits are to be found in the last volume of the Memoirs of Montpensier, the greater part fulsome and insipid.

youthful merit delights me. I could wish the dear boy to have a good education: it is presuming too much to leave every thing to a good natural understanding. There were two Rabutins in the regiment of Anjou, commanded by Saint Géran; he has mentioned them to me in very strong terms of praise: one of them was killed in the last battle M. de Turenne gained near Strasbourg; the other was wounded. These brothers were distinguished by their valour. I think it odd that this virtue should be inherited only by the males of our family, and that the females should have taken all the timidity. Never was any thing better divided, nor more distinctly separated; for you have not left us a particle of boldness. In some families the virtues and the vices are a little blended. But let us return to the battle.

M. de Turenne has again beaten the enemy, taken eight pieces of cannon, a great quantity of arms and baggage, and remained master of the field. These continual victories give great pleasure to the king. I thought your letter to him a very good one, and wished its effect might be equally so. Fortune has never displeased me so highly as in abandoning you. She has been guilty of still greater injustice towards M. de Rohan *. His affair goes on badly. It is by witnessing greater misfortunes, that we learn to bear our own with patience.

Send me word how you proceed with the history of our Rabutins. Cardinal de Retz is here. His head is full of genealogies. I should be delighted with his being acquainted with ours, in the charms you have given it. It would have been a great amusement to him at Commercy, but he does not now talk of going

* The chevalier de Rohan had entered into a conspiracy to deliver Quillebœuf to the enemy. He was beheaded in the following month.

there. I rather think you will find him here; it is our interest that he should pass the winter with us, his society being more desirable than that of almost any other person.

My daughter is very much pleased with what you have written to her; nothing can be more gallant. She promises to write to you by the first opportunity, with good ink †. My son sends you a thousand thanks for your remembrance. It is true, that to be in the situation, in which the gendarmes were placed at the battle of Senef, was precisely to be shot. What a happiness that he is safe! Adieu, my dear cousin.

LETTER * CCXCIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, January 24, 1675.

I THINK of you very often, my cousin, and I never see the marchioness d'Humières, that we do not, at least, heave a sigh on your account. Like me, she is full of good will towards you, but all our wishes do not advance the decrees of Providence a single step; for I believe in Providence; it is my philosophy. You on your side, and I on mine, with different opinions, are both travelling on the same road; we both aim at tranquillity, you by your reasoning, and I by submission. The strength of your mind, and the docility of mine, lead us equally to despise every thing that passes here below. It is in reality of little moment. We have scarcely any thing to do with our destiny; all is in the

† M. de Bussy had complained that he had not been able to read madame de Grignan's postscript, because it was written with such pale ink. "It is only fit," said he, "to write promises that are not intended to be kept."

hands of Providence. With such thoughts as these, judge whether I cannot comprehend your tranquillity.

What say you to our success, and the glorious action of M. de Turenne, in making the enemy repass the Rhine? This termination of the campaign gives us some rest, and disposes the court to pleasure and amusement. There is a new opera, which is very fine. I leave the pen to madame de Grignan; I say the pen, for you know she has some extraordinary ink that is exclusively her own.

FROM MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

I HAVE not been able to find any black paper, and therefore have determined to make use of the blackest ink in Paris. It is only a miser's feast: see how my mother's is effaced by mine. I have nothing now to fear but blots, which are almost unavoidable with ink of this thickness: but I must oblige you in your own way. Indeed, sir, you would do much better to spare both our ink and our paper, and come and see us, since you do me the favour to assure me, that my stay in Paris is not indifferent to you. Come then, and take advantage of a good which the first swallow will deprive you of. If I were not writing to you in my mother's letter, I should tell you, that even this will be neglecting too long the duties which call me to Provence; but she would take it amiss, if I were not to include her in the number of those who ought to regulate my conduct. She is now mistress of it, and I have the mortification of experiencing her authority only in things wherein my complaisance and obedience will be suspected of being confederates with her. I know not why I enter into this long harangue. It seems to me as if apologies were not necessary with you: it must

therefore be solely for the pleasure of talking to one who listens with more attention, and replies with more propriety, than any person I have the honour of being acquainted with.

CONTINUATION OF MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ'S LETTER.

Ah! this indeed may be called good ink. Would to God you were here! we would talk of a thousand things, but especially of the sentiments which the Provençale mentions to you, and which, true as they are, must be concealed from the generality of the world, because they are not very probable. Corbinelli is here; he thinks you have forgotten him, but he loves and honours you extremely. The remembrance of you constitutes the charm of our conversations, and then makes us regret our loss.

LETTER * CCXCIV.

FROM THE COUNT DE BUSSY TO MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

January 30, 1675.

I should be very fastidious, madam, if I were not satisfied with your ink, and even with your heart. It is true that your mother's ink turns pale by the side of yours, and you now completely efface it. You have even steered clear of blots: but from what rocks have you not also escaped! Beauty, wit, youth, and opportunity, have not made the smallest blot in your conduct. I have only to add, madam, that if I were at liberty to visit Paris, I would gladly do so; but, I assure you, I should sometimes leave it, for the pleasure of receiving your letters.

LETTER * CCXCV.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

Paris, April 3, 1675.

WHEN my letters travel like tortoises by the slow conveyance of the carrier, and you find them in a box of clothes, which are generally two or three months on the road, I do not wonder at your being angry with me. I should even be sorry if you had not a desire to scold me; but you see I have not been to blame, and if my niece at Sainte-Mary has calculated upon the pleasure of setting us at variance, she is completely taken in; for I think we have had so many quarrels, that we shall quarrel no more for ever.

The maréchale d'Humières speaks for your return whenever a favourable opportunity offers, and speaks so well, and with so much courage and judgement, that she deserves to succeed in your favour; but the hour is not come: that of the departure of all the world is approaching. There was a rumour of peace, and you know there has been a change of plenipotentiaries; in the meantime we are always going to war, and the governors and lieutenants-general of provinces are returning to their posts. All these separations affect me painfully. I think also that madame de Grignan will not leave us without emotion: she has desired me to make you a thousand remembrances for her. You have reason to be satisfied with her heart: she loses no opportunity of showing me how much she esteems you; and let me here express my esteem for my niece de Bussy. She thinks as you do; and what she has written to me very much reminds me of your manners.

TO MADEMOISELLE DE BUSSY, AFTERWARDS MARCHIONESS DE COLIGNY.

I WISH you, my dear, a very good and agreeable husband. If he is equal to your merit, he will be wanting in nothing.

TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

As I was writing the above, I received a letter which informs me that this husband is found. I think it singular that the intelligence should have arrived so perfectly à-propos. I entreat you, my dear cousin, to inform me of the particulars. If the name had been made on purpose, it could not have been more to our wishes. Pray tell me a word of the person and of his residence.

TO MADEMOISELLE DE BUSSY.

MY dear niece, I take extreme interest in your fate. My daughter already congratulates you, and embraces you with all her heart.

Amiable father, amiable daughter, adieu. I am wholly yours.

LETTER *CCXCVI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, May 20, 1675.

I THINK I am mad in not having written to you upon the intended marriage of my niece: but in reality, I am almost mad, and this is the only good reason I can give you. My son joins the army in three days, my

daughter goes to Provence in a few more: you must not think that with the pain of such separations I can preserve any thing like good sense. Take pity on me, therefore, and believe that in all my tribulations I feel the injustice that has been done you. I highly approve M. de Coligny's alliance: it appears to me a good establishment for my niece, and, with respect to the description of the gentleman, I am satisfied with your account. I beg my compliments to both, and indeed to all three; for I suppose you are not at present very far asunder. Adieu, my dear cousin; my dear niece, adieu.

LETTER CCXCVII.

TO MONSIEUR DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Tuesday, May 22, 1675.

As I have the honour to be acquainted with your lady, and know how well she delivers the compliments that are intrusted to her care; I think it proper to let you know myself, that I love you too much, and that I should be extremely obliged to you if you would love me a little in return. You must allow that nothing can be more reasonable; it is absolutely giving one's love away, to make a bargain of this kind.

We miss you sadly; we used to delight in seeing you return home every evening, and in enjoying your company, which is very agreeable; and let me tell you another thing, that except when we hate you, we love you extremely. The heroine I expect will not return so soon; she is very dull, but I am used to see her so when you are absent. It is hotter at Besançon *, than

* The king was then assisting in person at the siege of Besançon.

in the port of Toulon. You know how severely poor St. Geran has been wounded; and that his pretty wife, and madame de Villars, immediately set out to see him. It was reported he was dead; but by letters of the 18th, we hear he is somewhat better. As you are not quite at liberty to marry his widow, I presume you are very willing he should live. I have sent you one of the prettiest fables* you have ever read. Are you acquainted with no one that is as complete a courtier as the fox?

I am perfectly charmed with the praises you bestow on my grand-daughter; I assure you I place to my own account all the fondness you show her. Adieu, my dearest count; it is scarcely possible to embrace you more affectionately than I do. My son sends you a thousand compliments.

LETTER CCXCVIII.

TO MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

Livri, Monday, May 27, 1675.

How dreadful is the day, my child, that ushers in absence! How did you bear it? For my part, I felt all the bitterness and grief I imagined I should, and had so long dreaded. What a moment was that of our separation! How bitter the farewell, how melancholy the parting between two persons who are so devoted to each other! But I will not continue the subject, nor *celebrate*, as you used to say, all the thoughts that oppress my heart. I am sure you were affected at em-

* A fable of La Fontaine's, called the Lion's Court (la Cour du Lion).

bracing me for the last time *. I returned to Paris in a condition that you may easily imagine: madame de Coulanges gave way to me in every thing. I stopped first at cardinal de Retz's, where my grief so much increased, that I sent to request M. de la Rochefoucault, madame de la Fayette, and madame de Coulanges, who were all come to see me, to excuse my receiving them: we should conceal our weakness before the strong. The good cardinal entered into all my distress; indeed the great friendship and esteem he has for you make him sympathise with me in my loss. His picture is painting by a monk of St. Victor; and I believe, notwithstanding Caumartin, he will give it to you. He sets off in a few days; his secret † has got wind, and his domestics are bathed in tears.

Do not condemn me, my dear child, for what I felt when I got home. How different did every thing appear! What solitude! what gloom! There were your room, your closet, and your picture—but ah! the dear original was gone! M. de Grignan will perfectly understand my meaning, and enter into all my feelings on the occasion. The next morning, which was yesterday, I awoke at five o'clock; so I got up, and called upon Corbinelli and the abbé, and brought them hither with me. We have had incessant rains, and I very much fear lest the roads in Burgundy should be spoiled. We amuse ourselves here with reading the Maxims, and Corbinelli explains them to me. He uses all his endeavours to teach me the proper government of my

* The mother and daughter took their leave of each other at Fontainbleau, whither madame de Coulanges and madame de Sévigné conducted madame de Grignan on her way.

† The cardinal de Retz had taken the resolution to retire to Commerci, with a design to retrench his expenses, in order to pay off his debts before he died, in which he was happy enough to succeed.

heart. I shall be a considerable gainer by this excursion, if I am happy enough to retain his lessons. I intend returning to-morrow; I stood in need of this short repose, to recover my senses a little, and make my face fit to be seen.

LETTER CCXCIX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, May 20, 1675.

Let me entreat you, my dear, to be persuaded, that you have not failed in any respect. One of your reflections would be more than sufficient to efface the remembrance of a crime; how much more those slight inadvertencies which would be remarked by no one but ourselves! Believe me, when I assure you, I can entertain no other sentiments for you but those of the warmest affection, which can end only with my life. While at Livri, I endeavoured to learn the means of parrying off these attacks of tenderness; but they returned with such vehemence to the charge, that my reason would have sunk beneath the effort. However, I trust that the exercise of devotion, and the love of God, will restore peace to my mind. To this consideration, and this alone, you must yield.

Corbinelli has been my only comfort at Livri: his turn of mind pleases me; and his attachment to me is so great, that I can open my whole heart to him. I returned hither from Livri yesterday, and stopped at our good cardinal's, who has made himself dearer to me by the regard he expresses for you, than by any other tie that connected him before. He is full of business: he passes his Whitsuntide at St. Dennis, but is to return here again for a week or ten days. Nothing is new

talked of but his intended retreat. Every one speaks of it according to his humour, though it doubtless calls for general admiration. Mesdames de Lavardin, de la Troche, and de Villars, overwhelm me with notes and attentions; but I am not yet in a situation to profit by their kindness. Madame de la Fayette is at St. Maur: madame de Langeron has a violent swelling in her head; it is feared that it will prove fatal.

The queen and madame de Montespan, on Monday last, had an interview of two hours at the Carmelites in the Rue au Bouloir; and parted seemingly very well pleased with each other. I wrote to you the day before yesterday, and directed the letter to the care of the chamarier at Lyons: I should be very sorry that it had miscarried; for there was one from our cardinal enclosed, as there is likewise in this. Your letter is calculated to affect the heart and the soul. M. de Coulanges shall be informed of your kind remembrance of him. It is true we should not lose a single moment at the time of parting; I should have been extremely sorry not to have accompanied you as far as Fontainbleau: the instant of separation was indeed terrible, but it would have been still worse here. I will never lose a moment when I can see you; I have nothing to reproach myself with on that score, and in order to reconcile myself with Fontainbleau, I will come and meet you there. God will supply me with the means of preserving my life; be under no concern, therefore, about my health; I am very careful of it for your sake: you need never be uneasy for those who weep readily. God preserve me from those sorrows that deny the relief of tears! It is true, that some thoughts and some words affect us strangely, but there is no danger for those who can weep. I have given tidings of you, to your friends;

I thank you, my dear countess, for your delightful distinction.

The maréchal de Crequi is besieging Dinan. It is said that there is a commotion at Strasbourg: some are for permitting the emperor's troops to pass, while others are for adhering strictly to the promise they made M. de Turenne. I have had no news of the warriors. I am informed the chevalier de Grignan has had the ague; but you will hear of that more particularly from himself.

LETTER CCC.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, May 31, 1675.

I HAVE received only your first letter yet, my dear child; but that is invaluable. I have seen nothing since your absence, and every fresh person reminds me of it: they talk to me of you; they pity me: they —— but stop: is it not such thoughts as these we should pass lightly over? Let us then do so.

I was yesterday at madame de Verneuil's in my way from St. Maur, where I had been with cardinal de Retz. At the hotel de Sully, I met mademoiselle de Launoi *, who is just married to the old count de Montrevel; the wedding was kept there: you never saw a bride so pert: she bustles about the house, and calls *husband*, as if she had been married for twenty years. This same husband of hers, you must know, is very much

* Adriana-Philippa-Thérèse de Launoi, who had been maid of honour to the queen, was married to James-Mary de la Baume Montrevel in 1678, and not in 1672, as it is said by mistake in the history of the great officers of the crown.

troubled with the ague; he expected his fit the day after he was married, but missed it: upon which Fieubet said, "We have found a remedy for the ague, but who can tell us the dose?" Mesdames des Castelnau, Louvigni, Sully, and Fiesque, were there. I leave you to guess what these charming women said to me. My friends are too solicitous about me; they harass me; but I do not lose a single moment that I can spend with our dear cardinal. These letters will inform you of the arrival of the coadjutor; I saw and embraced him this morning. He is to have a conference this evening with his eminence and M. d'Hacqueville on the steps he is to take. He has hitherto remained incog.

The duchess has lost mademoiselle d'Engheif: one of her sons is going to die besides; her mother is ill: madame de Langeron is already under ground; the prince and the duke in the army; ample subjects for tears, and, as I am told, she is not sparing of them. I leave d'Hacqueville to tell you news of the war; and the Grignans to write to you about the chevalier: if he should return hither, I will take as much care of him as of my own son. I imagine you are now upon the tranquil Saone: our minds ought to resemble this calm view, but our hearts perpetually seduce them: mine is wholly with my daughter. I have already told you, that my greatest difficulty is to divert my thoughts from you, for they all tend to the same point.

Ten o'clock at night.

Here we are all together at my abbé's. The coadjutor is as happy this evening as he was perplexed in the morning. The abbé de Grignan has managed the archbishop of Paris * so well, that the coadjutor will be

* François de Harlai, archbishop of Paris.

received by him as a very dear and agreeable deputy: so he is in high spirits. To-morrow he is to see M. de Paris, and will then resume the title of coadjutor of Arles, which he has quitted for the last twenty-four years, for the more humble one of the abbé d'Aiguebère, under which he concealed himself. I am only sorry for you, my dear, who will not have his society, which must always be a loss, but especially in Provence. The abbé is of opinion, that the chevalier's fever will be tractable enough to allow of his continuing his journey. D'Hacqueville says, that Dinan is given up.

Adieu, my dearest. You only are wanting to make our party complete: you are beloved by every one of us. This I think you need not doubt.

LETTER CCCI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, June 5, 1675.

I HAVE not received any of your letters since that from Sens; you will therefore easily conceive how anxious I am to be informed of your health and safety. I am fully persuaded you have written to me, and complain of nothing but the management, or rather mismanagement, of the post. According to the calculations of your friends here, you should be by this time at Grignan, unless you were detained at Lyons during the holidays. In short, my dear child, I have accompanied you step by step all the way, and am in hopes the Rhône behaved with proper respect to you. I have been at Livri with Corbinelli; but returned here with all the haste I could, that I might not lose a moment in seeing our dear cardinal. The great affection he has

for you, and the long friendship which has subsisted between him and me, have attached me to him very sincerely: I see him every evening from eight till ten, and I think he is very glad to have me with him till his bed-time. Our conversation is constantly about you; this is a subject we are fond of expatiating upon, and indeed it seems the master-sentiment of both hearts. He is for coming hither, but I cannot bear this house when you are not in it.

The nuncio informed him yesterday, that he had just learned by a courier from Rome, that he was appointed to a cardinalship. The pope * has lately made a promotion of his creatures, as it is called. The crowns are put off these five or six years, and consequently M. de Marseilles †. The nuncio told Bonvoulour, who went to congratulate him on his promotion, that he hoped his holiness would not now accept cardinal de Retz's resignation of his hat; that he should use all his endeavours to dissuade his holiness from doing so, as he had the honour of being his colleague: so now we have another cardinal, cardinal Spada. Cardinal de Retz sets out on Tuesday; I dread the day; for I shall suffer extremely in losing so valuable a friend: his courage seems to increase in proportion as that of his friends diminishes.

The duchess de la Valière pronounced her vows yesterday ‡. Madame de Villars promised to take me

* Clement X.

† Toussaint de Forbin-Janson, bishop of Marseilles, and afterwards bishop of Beauvois, was not made cardinal till 1690, at the promotion by Alexander VIII.

‡ For more than three years she had only received at court insults from her rival, and unkindness from the king. She remained there, she said, merely from a spirit of penitence, and added, "When the life of

to see it; but by some misunderstanding, we thought we should not get places. Nothing more, however, was necessary than to present ourselves at the door, though the queen had given out that the admission should not be general; and, after all, we did not go. Madame de Villars was very much vexed at it. The beautiful duchess performed this action like every other of her life, in the most charming manner possible: she is surprisingly handsome: but you will be astonished to hear that M. de Condom's (Bossuet's) sermon was not so good as was expected. The coadjutor was there; he will tell you how well the affair goes on, with respect to M. de Paris and M. de St. Paul; but he finds the shade of M. de Toulon and the spirit of M. de Marseilles every where.

Madame de Coulanges goes from hence on Monday with Corbinelli: this deprives me of my companions. You know how good Corbinelli is to me, and how kindly he enters into all my sentiments. I am convinced of his friendship, and feel his absence; but, my child, after having lost you, of what else can I complain? It is true that you are interested in my complaints, because he is one of those with whom I most enjoyed the consolation of speaking of you; for you must not imagine, that those to whom I cannot speak freely are as agreeable to me as those who enter into my feelings. You seem to me to be apprehensive that I make myself ridiculous, and that I am too apt to divulge my sentiments on this pleasing subject. No, no, my dear, fear nothing; I am able to govern the tor-

a Carmelite appears to me too severe, I have only to call to mind what those persons made me suffer," pointing to the king and to madame de Montespan.

rent. Trust to me, and let me love you, till it shall please God to take you out of my heart, in order to place himself there; for you can yield to none but him. In short, my heart is so entirely occupied with, and so full of you, that finding myself incapable of any other thought, I have been forbidden from performing the devotions of the season. Adieu, my dear child, for the present: I shall finish my letter this evening.

I have just received your letter from Macon; I cannot yet read it without the fountain playing its old tricks: my heart is so extremely sensible, that the least thing that affects it quite overcomes me. You may imagine that, with this fine disposition, I frequently meet with opportunities to try it: but, pray, have no fears for my health. I can never forget the philosophy you inspired me with the evening before we parted; I improve by it as much as I can; but I have such an habitual weakness, that in spite of your good lessons, I often yield to my emotion.

Our cardinal will have left me before you receive this; it will be a melancholy day to me, for I am extremely attached to his person, his merit, his conversation, which I enjoy as much as I can, and the friendship he expresses for me. His soul is of so superior an order, that it is not to be expected that his life should be attended with only common events. He that makes it a law to himself, to do always what is most great and heroic, must place his retreat in some proper part of his life, like a shade beautifully disposed in a piece of painting, and leave his friends to lament it.

How facetious you are, my child, with the newspaper in your hand! What! can you derive amusement from it already? I did expect that you would at least have waited till you had crossed the vile Durance. The con-

versation between the king and the prince appears to me very humorous; I think you would have been entertained with it even here. I have just received a letter from the chevalier, who is well; he is with the army, and has only had five attacks of the ague: this is one subject of uneasiness less; but his letter, which is full of friendship, is in the true German style; for he will not believe a syllable of the retreat of cardinal de Retz: he desires me to tell him the truth, which I shall not fail to do. I shall distribute all your compliments, and I am sure they will be well received: every body thinks it an honour to be remembered by you: M. de Coulanges was quite proud of it. The coadjutor will relate to you the success of his journey; but he will not boast that he was on the point of being stifled at madame de Louvois' by twenty women, who each supposed they had a right to embrace him: this occasioned a confusion, an oppression, a suffocation, of which the bare idea almost suffocates me, accompanied by the most high-flown, reiterated, and affected compliments that it is possible to conceive: madame de Coulanges describes the scene very drolly. I wish you may have the company at Grignan you mention. My son is well: he sends you a thousand remembrances. M. de Grignan will be very willing for me to embrace him, now that he is no longer occupied with the hustle of the boat.

M. de Rochefort is besieging Huy; the town is taken, the castle still resists. M. de Nogent gave a fricasee the other day to madame d'Heudicourt, madame de Sanzei, and M. de Coulanges, at the Maison Rouge: they heard five or six loud voices, shrieks, high words, and ridiculous proposals, in the next room: M. de Coulanges would see what it was; and he found there madame Baillet, Madaillan, one of the Pourceaugnacs, the beautiful Englishwoman, and Montalais. Mon-

talais fell on her knees and humbly entreated Coulanges not to say a word of the matter; but he contrived that all Paris should know it, and Montalais is in despair, that the use she makes of her precious Englishwoman should be discovered.

Adieu, my dearest; I conclude, that I may not weary you. Alas! what a change it is, to have no other pleasure than that of receiving your letters, after having been so long accustomed to the happiness of seeing and conversing with you!

FROM MADAME DE COULANGES.

We only regret those we hate: this is a truth I have learnt since you left us. We only follow those we hate; for Saturday next I set out upon your footsteps, and shall not be pleased with my journey till I have crossed the Rhine. I was to-day at St. Cloud, where I was asked after you, which gave me no small pleasure; for my hatred to you so very nearly resembles friendship, that I am often mistaken in it. I am M. de Grignan's most obedient servant.

LETTER CCCII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, June 7, 1675.

At length, my dear, I am reduced to the solitary comfort of receiving your letters; it is true that these are very dear to me, but I cannot reflect that I have had you for fifteen months together, without feeling the most lively emotions of tenderness and grief. There are some people in the world who would persuade me that my excess of fondness was troublesome to you, and

that my constant anticipation of your wants and inclinations, which in consequence became my own, must have been insipid and repugnant to you. I know not, my dear child, how true this may be; but I can safely say, that it never was my intention to make you uncomfortable. I must confess that I have perhaps a little too much indulged my own inclination, and suffered you as seldom out of my sight as possible; and this proceeded from my being unable to deprive myself of the pleasure of seeing you; but I had never any reason to think this behaviour was irksome to you. After all, my dear girl, let me beg you to think well of the great confidence I have in you, and to believe that it is impossible for any one to be more perfectly forlorn and wretched than I am in your absence; you give me excellent advice as to my self-government on these occasions; I attend to your lessons, and endeavour to put them in practice. I do as other people do, I go out, and I come in; but when I can talk of you I am happy, and a few tears relieve me inexpressibly. I know where I can indulge myself in this liberty; you judge rightly that having seen you every where, it is difficult to me, in the beginning, not to be sensible to a thousand things I meet with in my way.

Yesterday I saw La Villars, who has a most sincere regard for you; we were alone, indulging ourselves in solitude at the Thuilleries. I dined in the forenoon with the cardinal, and could not help being afflicted at my not seeing you there. I had a good deal of conversation with the abbé du Michel, to whom we give in trust, as it were, the person of his eminence. The abbé seems to me a very good sort of man; he appears to have a sound judgement and clear reason, and expresses the greatest regard for our friend; so that we hope he will be of service to him in taking care of his health, and

preventing him from injuring it, by too strict an attention to the duties of his retirement. They are to set out on Tuesday; this will be another day of grief for me, though not to be compared to that of Fontainbleau. Think, my child, that a fortnight has already passed, and that the days slide away in whatever way they are spent. Every one you have mentioned is delighted with your remembrance, and receives me better in consequence. I shall see our cardinal this evening: he will have me stay an hour or two every evening with him before his bed-time, that I may take advantage of the little time that remains.

Corbinelli was with me when I received your letter, and shared in your pleasure in confounding the Jesuit; he wished heartily he had been a witness of your victory. Madame de la Troche was charmed with what you say of her. Be perfectly easy, my dear child, with respect to my health: I know you will hear no jesting upon that subject. The chevalier de Grignan is quite well. I am going to send your letter to M. de Turenne. Our brethren are at St. Germain. I have a great mind to send you La Garde's letter, which would give you a general view of the life that is led at court. The king went to confession, and received the sacrament, on Whitsunday; so did madame de Montespan*; her life is exemplary; she is wholly occupied with her workmen, and goes to Saint Cloud, where she plays at hoca.

A-propos, my hair stood on end the other day, when

* A momentary separation took place between the king and madame de Montespan. But Bossuet, by whose exhortations this was effected, did not long enjoy his success. The lovers had no sooner met, and conversed again for a quarter of an hour, than they dismissed their scruples, and the birth of the duchess of Orleans and the count de Toulouse was, according to madame de Caylus, the consequence.

the coadjutor told me, that when he went to Aix, he found M. de Grignan there playing at hoca! What madness! In the name of God, do not permit this; it is a point you ought to gain, if he has any love for you. I hope Paulina is well, since you do not mention her to me; I desire you will love her for the sake of her godfather, M. de la Garde. Madame de Coulanges has so well managed the princess d'Harcourt, that she herself begs your pardon a thousand times, for not being at home when you called to take leave of her. I would not have you trifle with her on this occasion. What you say about trees which shed their leaves is admirable; the unchangeableness of those in Provence* is absolutely tiresome. It is much better to grow green again, than to be always green. Corbinelli says that it is the property of God alone to be immutable, and that immutability in any thing else is an imperfection: he was in a fine humour for philosophising to-day. Madame de la Troche and the prior of Livri were here; and he amused himself in proving to them the attributes of the Deity. Adieu, my dearest child; I embrace you: but, alas! when shall I embrace you more closely? Life is so short! But I must pass over that thought. Your letters are at present the only objects of my impatience.

LETTER CCCIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, June 12, 1675.

I HAD the happiness yesterday of taking a solitary walk with his eminence in the wood of Vincennes; he thought

* In Provence there are several kinds of trees that never lose their leaves, but remain green throughout the year; as the olive, the orange-tree, the evergreen oak, the laurel, &c.

the air would do me good, and, as he had nothing particular to do, he proposed it to me. We were four hours together, and I hope I improved the time to my advantage: the subjects of our conversation were such as perfectly suited with his character. In losing him, I lose the only comfort I had, and cannot help weeping for myself, and for you also, my child, when I think of the affection he has for us both. His departure will quite overwhelm me.

Madame de Coulanges set out last Tuesday very melancholy, but very well pleased to have Corbinelli with her. Do you know any thing of M. de St. Vallier's affair? He was in love with mademoiselle du Ruvroi, and prevailed on his majesty to sign the marriage-contract, nothing more. He then very confidently borrowed ten thousand crowns of madame de Ruvroi, as the portion he was to receive with her daughter: having the money in his hands, he went home, sent her a promissory note for it, disappeared, and is gone nobody knows where. When the king was informed of the affair, he said, M. de St. Vallier might make a jest of madame de Ruvroi and her daughter if he pleased, but that he would not suffer him to make a jest of him; upon which he has had notice given him, that unless he immediately returns to fulfil the articles, by marrying the young lady, he must never think of returning again. His majesty has likewise ordered him to resign his post, or that it shall immediately be taxed. This conduct of St. Vallier is so completely ridiculous, that every one imagines it is a trick to draw the father in to give his consent to the match. The king had bestowed a *brevet de retenue* on St. Vallier of a hundred thousand livres, besides a pension of six thousand francs, in favour of the marriage. So you see these brevets are not so rare as that they are sometimes given.

I was yesterday evening with madame de Sanzei and d'Hacqueville: I saw Vassé come in, and thought it was his ghost, but by some enchantment it was his body. He is here incognito, and sends a thousand remembrances to you. I regret the three weeks you might have passed with cardinal de Retz, who does not set out till Saturday. I wonder how, day after day, and every day sad and gloomy, the time has passed since your departure. Did I tell you that the duke has lost another son? This is the second within a week.

I have received yours of the fifth from Grignan, which has relieved me from the uneasiness I was under concerning your health. You say what is very true, and what I feel powerfully, that "the days on which we do not expect letters, are occupied in expecting the days on which we are to receive them." There is a certain degree in friendship, in which we always feel alike; but you require calmness from your friends, which it is very difficult to promise you; for instance, you will not have them employ themselves in serving you, in being solicitous, and interesting themselves about you; I have already told you, that it is wholly impossible for them to agree to this; for, unluckily, these are the very things they have the strongest inclination to do; but as it is more common for our friends to serve us, than to wish our enemies only to do so, I do not think, my dear child, that you will gain your cause, or prevent us from showing our friendship whenever an opportunity offers, as it has been the case from the creation of the world, or, in other words, since there has been any thing like affection in the human race. You have given me great pleasure by mentioning my dear grand-children to me. I imagine you will have great joy in remarking the dawn of their little reason. I could wish you would not go to Aix; you will be more

comfortable at Grignan, and it will be the means of hastening M. de Grignan's return: obtain this little favour too from him, and persuade the archbishop to pass the warm weather with you; you will not be incommoded by the heat, with the assistance of your north-east wind. I expect a long letter from M. de Grignan, I assure him: can it be possible that he should find the days too short to write to me, when I find them so long, that I really think a house could be built in a day if it were begun early in the morning? Madame de Montespan is going on with hers, and amuses herself greatly among the workmen. Monsieur visits her frequently; she goes sometimes to St. Cloud to a party at ombre, and several ladies go to Clagni to visit her. Madame de Fontevraud, who went there full of joy to spend a few days with her father, whom she adores, was shocked almost to death at finding him speechless, and on the point of relapsing into the same state of lethargy in which he was some time ago. The abbé Têtu continues to manage her as he pleases; I cannot but admire the care that Providence takes to amuse him; for no sooner is one (madame de Coulanges) gone to Lyons, than another comes from Anjou*.

It is said at M. Colbert's, and at the marshal de Villeroi's, that Montecuculli† has very humbly repassed the Rhine, and that M. de Turenne, through excess of civility, has waited on him back, and repassed that river after him: our enemies, poor creatures, are at their

* Madame de Caylus speaks thus of the abbess of Fontevraud: "I have heard from persons who were acquainted with her, that it was impossible to unite in the same person a greater share of judgement, wit, and learning. Her learning was even the effect of her judgement. A nun without employment, she sought an amusement adapted to her situation: but neither science nor reading destroyed her natural sense."

† General of the imperial army, and one of the greatest captains of that age.

wit's end; the very sight of M. de Turenne confounds them. Huy is not yet taken. I am making up my packet at the cardinal's. He has a slight attack of the gout. I hope this will be a means of putting a stop to his leaving us. I pity you for not having the pleasure of seeing him while he is yet among us.

We hear that Huy was certainly taken on the fifth or sixth without the loss of a man. Yesterday the queen went to a collation at Trianon. She stopped first at the church, and then at Clagni, where she took up madame de Montespan, and carried her in the coach with her to Trianon.

LETTER CCCIV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, June 14, 1675.

Instead of visiting you in your apartment, my dear child, I sit down to converse with you by letter; when I am so unfortunate as not to have you with me, the most natural consolation I can find is to write to you, to receive your letters, to speak of you, or to take some step in your affairs. I passed the afternoon yesterday with cardinal de Retz: you cannot posibly guess what we talk of when we are together. I always begin by telling you that you cannot love him too well, and that I think you happy in having so firmly fixed the kindness and affection he before felt for you. Let me know how you bear the air at Grignan, and whether it has already begun to prey upon you; how you enjoy your health, and how you look. Your picture is very pleasing, but far less so than your person, without reckoning that it wants the power of speech. Be not uneasy about my health; the rule I observe at present is, to be

irregular; I am not sensible of any indisposition; I dine alone; stay at home till five or six o'clock, and go in the evening, when I have no business of importance to keep me within, to the house of one of my friends. I walk or ride according to the distance, but I make every thing yield to the pleasure of being with our cardinal. I lose not a moment he can spare me, and he is very obliging in this respect. I shall feel more sensibly his departure and his absence; but this does not prevent my indulging myself in the pleasure of his conversation: I never think of sparing myself; after having endured the pangs of parting with you, I have nothing to fear from any less tender attachment. Were it not for him, and for your affairs, I should go a little to Livri; but I make every consideration yield to these, which are above all my little pleasures.

The queen went to see madame de Montespan at Clagny on the day I told you she took her up in her carriage as she passed; she went into her room, where she staid half an hour; she then went into M. du Vexin's, who was a little indisposed, and afterwards took madame de Montespan to Trianon, as I informed you. Some ladies have been at Clagny: they found the fair lady so occupied with the building and enchantments that are preparing for her, that I fancy her like Dido building Carthage; but the resemblance will not hold good in any other respect. M. de la Rochefoucault and madame de la Fayette have entreated me to present their compliments to you. We fear you will have too much of the grand-duchess*. A prison is preparing for her at Montmartre, with which she would be frightened, if she did not hope to change it; but she will be caught: they are delighted in Tuscany to have got rid

* Marguerite-Louise d'Orléans, daughter of Gaston de France duke of Orléans, and of Marguerite de Lorraine, his second wife.

of her. Madame de Sully is gone: Paris is become a desert. I already wish myself out of it. I dined yesterday with the coadjutor at the cardinal's: I have left him in charge to inform you of that part of ecclesiastical history. M. Joli* preached at the opening of the assembly of the clergy, but as he took an ancient text, and preached only ancient doctrine, his sermon seemed a piece of antiquity altogether. It was a fine subject too for reflection.

The queen dined to-day at the Carmelites de Bouloi, with madame de Montespan, and madame de Fontevraud: you will see how this friendship will end. They say that M. de Turenne, as it were, conducts the enemy's troops to their quarters. My heart is much oppressed with the thoughts of losing the cardinal; the repeated intercourse of friendship and conversation which has so lately passed between us, redoubles my grief; he goes to-morrow. I have not yet received your letters. Believe, my dear, that it is not possible to love you more than I love you: nothing animates me but what has some relation to you. Madame de Rochebonne has written to me very affectionately; she told me with what feelings you received and read my letters at Lyons. I see, my dear, you are grown weak as well as I.

D'Hacqueville has sent you such a large packet, that it would be ridiculous to pretend to tell you any news now.

* Claude Joli, bishop of Agen.

LETTER CCCV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, June 19, 1675.

I ASSURE you, my dearest child, that next to the leave I took of you at Fontainbleau, to which no comparison can be made, I could not have taken a more melancholy one, than I did yesterday of cardinal de Retz, at M. de Caumartin's, four leagues from hence. I dined there on Monday, and found him in the midst of his three faithful friends; their dejected countenances drew tears into my eyes: and when I saw his eminence displaying his usual firmness of mind, and the same kindness and tenderness to me, I could scarcely support the sight. We spent the afternoon in one of the most agreeable woods in the world; and we staid there till six o'clock in the evening, engaged in a variety of conversations, so good, so kind, so delightful, so obliging, both to you and me, that I am deeply affected with it; and I tell you again, that you cannot love and honour him too much. Madame de Caumartin came from Paris, and with the three gentlemen who had remained in the house, joined us in the wood. I would have returned to Paris, but they detained me without much difficulty. I slept ill; in the morning I embraced our dear cardinal with tears, without the power of saying a word to the rest of the company. I returned hither very melancholy; and I am not yet recovered from the grief of this separation: the fountain was in a good train: but, in truth, this would have opened it, if it had been ever so firmly closed. That of madame de Savoy *

* Marie-Jeanne-Baptiste de Savoie-Nemours, duchess of Savoy.

must have opened all its springs. Were you not surprised at the sudden and unexpected death of the duke of Savoy (Charles Emanuel) at the age of forty? I am sorry the account you sent me of the assembly of the clergy has not been read; the fidelity of the post is sometimes an inconvenience. These priests give four millions six hundred thousand crowns; which is as much again as the other assembly: the way in which affairs are conducted there is admirable: the coadjutor will give you an account of it. I was delighted with what you say of Lannoi*, and with the demands under the name of establishment. I shall give your remembrances to mesdames de Villars and de Vins: it is who shall be mentioned in your letters. The chevalier de Buousson is gone from hence. He brings you a fan, which I think extremely pretty: instead of Cupids, there is a group of little chimney-sweepers. Can it be true, that La Sinniane is separated from her husband on the pretence of his gallantries? What folly! I should have advised her to have retaliated. I think the time long, as well as you, my dear, and perhaps longer than you, from one post to another. Time, who is often disagreeable to us on account of the swiftness of his flight, sometimes slackens his wing, as you say; in short, we are never contented. I cannot yet accustom myself not to see you, meet you, find you, nor even expect you. I am grieved at your absence, and unable to divert my thoughts from it. The cardinal would have effaced you a little from my mind; but you are so much mingled in our conversations, that after I had well considered it, I found it was you who rendered him so dear to me. You see, I improve but little by your philosophy: I am pleased to find that you yourself are

* Madame de Montreval.

not wholly exempt from the weakness of human nature.

There have been some few *gripings* in Britany, and at Renne there was a fit of the *stone colic*. M. de Chaulnes, attempting to disperse the people by his presence, was sent home with a shower of stones: but really this is carrying their insolence to a great height. The little person has written to her sister, that she wants sadly to be at Sitten, for that she is frightened to death every day; you know what she went to look for in Britany.

The duke is engaged in the siege of Limbourg. The prince remains with the king: you may judge of his uneasiness. I do not think that my son is at this siege, nor was at that of Huy. I am every day in expectation of hearing from him; but how great is my impatience to hear from you, my dear!

I send you a little piece, written with much spirit: it is a portrait of the cardinal. The person who wrote it is not one of his intimate friends, and has no desire that he should ever see it. He does not pretend to flatter him. I like the piece for all these reasons. I send it you; but I beg you not to give a copy of it. It is so tiresome to hear our own praises addressed to ourselves, that it is a pleasure to be assured there was no design of gratifying us, and that what is said is the simple unaffected truth. We are expecting news from Limbourg and Germany, which keeps every one in painful suspense. Adieu, my dear child; your picture is delightful; I want to embrace it, for it seems to start from the canvass. I wonder that any thing contributes to my happiness at present.

PORTRAIT OF CARDINAL DE RETZ*,

BY THE DUKE DE LA ROCHEFOUCAULT.

"Paul de Gondi, cardinal de Retz, is a man of an elevated, and capacious mind, but with more ostentation than real greatness of soul. His memory is extraordinary; his expressions have more force than politeness. His disposition is so easy, that he tamely and weakly endures the complaints and reproaches of his friends. He has a little piety, with some show of religion; and the appearance of ambition, without the passion. His vanity and advisers have led him to undertake things of great importance; but such as were almost always inconsistent with his profession. Without any design of advantage to himself, he has been the means of exciting the greatest commotions in the state; and, far from declaring himself the enemy of cardinal Mazarin, with a view of succeeding him in his department, he thought of nothing but rendering himself formidable to that minister, and indulging himself in the false vanity of being considered his opponent. He had address enough to obtain a cardinal's hat, by availing himself of the public misfortunes; he endured imprisonment with fortitude, and owed his liberty entirely to his boldness. His indolence supported him with honour, during several years of obscurity and exile; he maintained himself in the archbishopric of Paris against all Mazarin's power; yet resigned it after that minister's death, without knowing what he did, and without making use of that

* As this Portrait has not been exhibited either in the Gallery of Paintings, or the Memoirs of Mademoiselle, which contain the greatest part of the characters that were written at that time, it is presumed that it will be seen with greater pleasure, as being drawn by a masterly hand.

conjuncture to serve either his friends or himself. He was present at several conclaves, where his conduct always increased his reputation. He is naturally indolent; nevertheless, he is indefatigable when instigated by necessity; and when he has finished his business, he relapses into his former indifference. He has great presence of mind, and is so happy in turning to his advantage the incidents of fortune, that one could almost suppose he had foreseen and desired them. He loves story-telling; he wishes to surprise all who hear him, with extraordinary adventures, and is often more indebted to his imagination than his memory. Most of his good qualities are counterfeit; and nothing has contributed so much to his reputation, as knowing how to throw a pleasing light on his imperfections. Whatever pains he may have taken to appear engrossed by hatred or friendship, he is equally insensible to both. He is incapable of indulging in envy or avarice, perhaps through virtue, or perhaps through indolence. He has borrowed more of his friends than any individual could hope to repay; his vanity has been gratified in finding he had so much credit, and in endeavouring to acquit himself. He has neither taste nor delicacy; amuses himself with every thing, and is pleased with nothing. He has a great address in concealing the superficialness of his knowledge. His retreat is at once the most dazzling and the falsest action of his life. It is a sacrifice he has made to his pride, under the pretext of devotion; he flies from a court he can no longer attend, and retires from a world that already avoids him."

LETTER CCCVI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday evening, June 21, 1675.

I AM so uneasy, my dear child, at not having heard from you this week, that I hardly know what to do with myself. I cannot tell whom to blame; I well know it is not your fault, for I am certain you have written to me. I dread my journey to Britany, on account of the confusion into which it throws our correspondence. I have ended your two affairs here; so that I shall now set out as soon as possible, that I may the sooner return; and I cannot return, if I do not first set out.

The siege of Limbourg still continues: we are all in painful expectation of news from thence, as well as from M. de Turenne, who, they say, is near enough to come to an engagement with this same Montecuculli. I am in hopes, however, that nothing will happen, because we expect so many different things. After all, we must submit to Providence. Though my son is not at Limbourg, I cannot help, however, being interested there. And now, my dear, be obliged to me, for I was yesterday bled in the foot, merely to please you, and by way of precaution for my journey; for I thought, as well as you, that it was necessary, considering the anxiety of mind I have laboured under for two months past. I have had a number of visitors, and am so fatigued with keeping my bed these two days that I am quite stiff: it was a high jest to see how ill I bore this confinement. Mademoiselle de Méri laughed at me unmercifully. I have just had a letter from my son, who informs me, that they have got possession of the ditch and the half-moon at Limbourg, that the miners are at work at the

bastion, that there are several of the officers and men killed and wounded, and that M. de la Marck has done wonders. I am, my dear and lovely child, most truly yours.

LETTER CCCVII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, June 26, 1675.

I HAVE received two packets at once, my dear countess; I concluded you had written to me. You are an excellent correspondent: and your friendship is accompanied and assisted by such charms as render it delightful. When I receive letters from Provence, it is a subject of joy to all who love me, as it is a grief to them when I am disappointed: to read your letters, and to answer them, is the first business of my life: every thing else yields to this correspondence; and to love as I love you, makes every other attachment frivolous. Be assured I shall never fail to write to you twice a week, and if I were to write four times I should be equally punctual; punctual on account of the pleasure it gives me, not because I have promised it.

Madame du Puis-du-Fou came to pay me a visit: I had forgotten she was a widow, and took her weeds for a masquerade dress. The departure of madame de Toscane from hence is much doubted here; your ill fortune will decide it. It is certain, my dear, that we are very near neighbours, compared to the distance between Aix and the Rocks; a great distance grieves me as much as it does you. Alas! we are cruelly separated, as we foresaw with sorrow last winter, when we were so near one another. Can there be in life a more cruel misfortune?

Our cardinal will be to-morrow at Chalons; he has written to me very affectionately; I send you his letter. As to the cassolette which he desired you to accept, do not oblige me, my dear, to return it. There is nothing noble in such fancied generosity. I think I am sufficiently disinterested; and that I have given proofs of it: but there are occasions when it is rude and ungrateful to refuse. Why should not the cardinal have the privilege of making you such a present? To whom do you wish him to send this trifle? He has given up his plate to his creditors: if he should add this little piece to it, it might perhaps be valued at a hundred crowns. It is a curiosity, a token of remembrance, an ornament for a cabinet. Such presents ought to be received with affection and respect; and, as he observed last winter, it is insulting to refuse them; it is making them of too much consequence. I cannot therefore prevail with myself to cause him so much pain. Can you be sensible of the pleasure it will give him, to show you this little mark of his friendship, without being ashamed to refuse it with so much incivility? Are you to be told that this excess of vain-glory, in being above receiving a present, is a fault, and can gain you no credit? This is all I shall say upon the subject: it would be an insult to your understanding to add more. After all, it is to M. de Grignan that the cardinal makes the present. I believe it is already sent from Commerti: I will inclose it in the parcel with your work.

The coadjutor has laughed heartily at your comparison of cameos in painting to the history of France in verse. He was also very much amused at what you say of him and the agent (of the clergy). You do not know half the charms of your letters; you give a wonderful turn to every thing. We very well understood your answer to the capuchin: "Father, how hot it is!" and

we believe that, in the humour you are in, you can never go to confession. How is it possible to lay your heart open to strangers? It is as much as you can prevail upon yourself to do with your best friends. We hear your answer at this distance, and you could not have related your conversation more agreeably, unless you had told it us in person.

I thank you, my dear, for the pains you have taken to exculpate yourself from the charge of ever having been incommoded by my affection. There was no need of so kind an explanation. I believe of your tenderness every thing you wish me to believe; this persuasion is the happiness of my life. You explain yourself very well upon that will of yours, which it was impossible for me to divine, because you willed nothing. I ought to have understood you; and I shall do better than I have done, because we only wanted to understand one another. When you are restored to me, believe me, my dear, you shall have a thousand times more reason to be satisfied with me than you have ever had: I wish we could already fix the day, when we might embrace each other.

You laugh, my child, at poor friendship; you think it is doing it too much honour to consider it an impediment to devotion; and that it is not of sufficient consequence, to be an obstacle to our salvation. We judge of every thing by comparison: if it occupy our whole heart, then it is blameable; and whatever it may be that possesses us in this way, it renders us unfit to communicate. You see the affair of the syndic has exempted me from the combat. In a word, it is a misfortune to have such lively passions. I must endeavour to render them more calm, and to recover the possession of my heart. I shall not be less yours, and I shall be more my own. Corbinelli was very urgent with me to

take up this good resolution. It is true, that his absence adds to my uneasiness: he loves me much, and I love him; he is useful to me in every respect; but I must deprive myself of every thing, during my journey to Britany. And it is so necessary that I should go there, that I must not leave it to chance.

You must not on any account shave the head of the little marquis. I have consulted the learned; it is the way to put his little brain into disorder, to give him rheums, sore eyes, and black teeth; in a word, he is too weak to bear it. Let his hair be cut short with scissars; this is all you can do at present.

The cardinal's cook and steward will not leave him: their attachment is quite heroic; they prefer the honour of remaining with him to the best situations at court: it is impossible to hear them without admiring their affection. Poor Peau has done better still; he has died: he fell sick the evening of the cardinal's departure, and grief and fever together took him off in nine days. I saw him, and, though I cannot enter the house without sorrow, the servants that remained, made me come to admire them.

M. d'Hacqueville returned yesterday evening; I have not been able to see him without emotion. The cardinal's three faithful friends quitted him at Jouare: I fear and wish to see the other two. The cardinal has written me a second adieu. I beg him not to deprive me of the hope of seeing him again. I am extremely grieved at his retirement; I will let you know from time to time how he is. His courage appears to be infinite; I wish it may prove victorious.

I am very well recovered of my bleeding in the foot. I shall set out for Britany very soon, but not before I have put the finishing-stroke to all your affairs here: otherwise I should not rest a moment in quiet. I am of

your opinion with respect to what Philomela says; but we are equally to be pitied when we can find no place that brings pleasing images to our recollection, and when our recollection is so much alive, that we carry it incessantly along with us. I am persuaded our cardinal will not soon forget us.

There are some passages of your letters so delightful and so affectionate, that I dare not undertake to answer them: I pretend to no more than to feel them truly, and estimate their value.

ANSWER TO A LETTER FROM MADAME DE GRIGNAN, OF THE 19TH OF JUNE.

I have received your letter, informing me of the illness of the poor little marquis; I am very much concerned at it; and as for bleeding, I cannot comprehend that it can do any good, considering the terror it occasions to a child of three years old. In my time, we did not know what it was to bleed children. Madame de Sanzei persists in refusing to have her son bled: she gave him only a little powder for the worms, and he is recovered. I fear our child will be treated, in order to do him honour, like the children of the king and the duke *. I shall have no rest, my dear, till I hear how this fever terminates.

As to what you say of the future respecting the cardinal, it is true that I have seen him wholly taken up with the wish of showing you his friendship in the fullest extent, when he has paid his debts. This sentiment appeared to me worth imparting to you: but as you have two years to reflect on the way in which you

* The duke had just lost two of his children, within a few days of each other.

shall refuse his kindness, I think, my dear child, you must not take your measures so far off. God preserve our friend to us, and give us grace to be at that time in a situation to make him agree to our resolutions: it is unnecessary to vex him between this and then; and with regard to the cassolette, as he has not mentioned it to me a long time, I should think I was doing as in Boccacio, if, under the pretence of refusing, I had brought it to his recollection. I do not know what directions he has given respecting it.

M. de Turenne is very advantageously situated; there has been no engagement, as was reported. Our friends are all well in Flanders and in Germany. The beautiful little madame de Saint-Valeri has the small pox in a dreadful degree.

LETTER CCCVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, June 28, 1675.

Madame de Vins expressed herself very affectionately about you yesterday, my dear; that is, in her way, but it is not a bad one: there seemed no *interlineations* in what she said.

We have no news. The king's good star has brought the duke of Lorrain and the prince of Orange across the Meuse again. M. de Turenne has now elbow-room, so that we are no longer confined in any part. I am rejoiced that my letters are so pleasing to you: I can hardly think they are so agreeable as you say they are. I know they have no stiffness in them. Our good cardinal is gone to solitude; his departure gave me sorrow, and reminded me of yours. I have long remarked our cruel separations to the four corners of the world. It is

very cold: we are obliged to have a fire, and so are you, which is more astonishing still. You judge well respecting Quantova: if she cannot return to her old ways, she will push her authority and grandeur beyond the clouds; but she must prepare to be loved the whole year without scruple: in the mean time her house is crowded by the whole court, visits are paid alternately, and her consequence is unbounded. Be not uneasy respecting my journey to Britany: you are too good and too attentive to my health. I will have nothing to do with La Mousse: the dulness of others weighs me down more than my own. I have no time to go to Livri: I have made a vow to expedite your affairs. I shall give your compliments to madame de Villars and madame de la Fayette. The latter has still a little fever upon her. Adieu, my dearest child, believe me to be most sincerely yours.

LETTER CCCIX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, July 3, 1675.

Good heavens, my dear child, how ill I bear your absence! I have sometimes such cruel moments, when I reflect how we are situated with respect to each other, that I can scarcely breathe; and notwithstanding all my endeavours to drive the painful idea from me, it will always return. I ask pardon of your philosophy, for thus exposing my weakness; but for once do not be angry with me for indulging myself in the relief of telling you what I so often suffer, and which I conceal from every one besides. It is true, that Britany will increase the distance between us; what madness! Methinks it

looks as if we were going to throw ourselves into the sea, that we may have all France between us. God help us!

Two days ago I received a letter from our good cardinal, who is on the point of entering upon his retirement: I believe it will not be able for a considerable time to eradicate from his heart the regard he has for you: I am perfectly satisfied with the share I know I have in his affection.

I find you are forced to make use of your authority to oblige your son to take medicine: I think you are quite right. A little exertion of authority does not at all misbecome you, but it is very lucky for you that your child never saw you take medicine, for I am afraid that in that case your example would overturn your precepts. I remember, and I dare say you have not forgotten, how your brother mimicked you on one of these occasions. After all, I am delighted that the little marquis is out of danger; pray make use of the power you have over him, to manage him properly. I have entertained a very good opinion of him from his being so fond of you. I have been bled for your sake, and am very well.

But you wait my advice in regard to visiting the grand duchess at Montélimart; M. de Grignan advises you to go, but you have no equipage ready: how must this be managed? Why I think you may take your own time, and go on foot. I can give a pretty good guess what your determination will be. We expect her here as if she were a Colonna or a Mazarine, for the oddity of leaving her husband, after having lived with him upwards of fifteen years; otherwise we give honour to whom honour is due. Her prison will be disagreeable, but she thinks it will be made as comfortable as possi-

ble. I am persuaded she would very much like the house * that is not to be let: ah! what a pity that it is not to be let; and that authority and consequence should be pushed so far, if the return has been well managed!

It is odd, that the interests of Quantova and all her policy should agree so well with christianity; and that the advice of her friends should be exactly the same as M. de Condom's (Bossuet). You cannot think how triumphant she appears in the midst of her workmen, who are no less than twelve hundred. The palace of the Sun, or the enchanted gardens of Armida, are poor in comparison of what hers will be. She is visited by the wife of her firm friend (the queen), and by all the family in turn: she takes place neatry of all the duchesses; and the lady (madame de Richelieu) whom she got appointed, proves her gratitude every day by her actions. Your lamentations are very excellent over Britany; I wish I had Corbinelli with me; you will have him at Grignan. Let me recommend him to your care. I am going to visit the rascals who throw stones into their patron's garden. I am told there are five or six hundred blue bonnets in Lower Britany, who ought to be hanged, in order to teach them better manners. Upper Britany is wise; it is my own country.

My son sends me word that there is a detachment of ten thousand men; he is not of the number. The prince and the duke are there, but I was told yesterday that there is no danger, and that they were close to the enemy, the river only dividing them. No mention is made of M. de Turenne, except that he is so advantageously situated, as to be able to do what he pleases.

I imagined that the desire of being in favour with

* It is easily understood, that this house means the king's court. It was indeed said, that the grand-duchess had only left Italy in the hope of making a conquest of the king.

the academy at Arles, might have made you wish to have some of M. de la Rochefoucault's Maxims. The Portrait is his, and what made me approve it, and show it to the cardinal, was, its being written without the least intention of being seen. It was a secret I made myself mistress of, as it were by force, from my fondness of seeing a panegyric upon the absent, by a person who was neither an intimate friend, nor a flatterer. Our cardinal was as much pleased with it as I was, in observing the manner in which truth obliged even those who had no great regard for him to speak of him, when they imagined that he would never come to the knowledge of it*. We shall soon find how his retirement will sit upon him: unless it is the work of God, it cannot succeed.

We have had very cold weather here of late, but what most surprises me is, that you complain likewise of the cold in Provence: I do not remember finding it cold there in June. I see you living in perfect solitude, but I do not pity you; I keep my pity for those who are more proper objects, of which I am the first. I find great pleasure in being acquainted with the places, that contain those I love and think of perpetually. Not to know how to find them in idea, throws a disagreeable obscurity over the imagination: your chamber and your closet wound me; and yet I sometimes retire there alone to think of you, as not willing to spare myself too much.

Do you not intend to repair your terrace? I cannot bear the idea that it should be in ruins, and deprive you of the only good walk you have. What a long letter! but you know what pleasure I take in chatting

* Cardinal de Retz, who at that period had not written his Memoirs, seems to have had this Portrait in remembrance, when he traced in his work the character of M. de la Rochefoucault.

with you. Every other correspondence is neglected; for the great fish, you know, eat up the little ones. I embrace the little marquis: pray let him know that he has another mamma in the world besides yourself: I am afraid he forgets me.

LETTER CCCX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, July 5, 1675.

I SIT down, my dear, to talk to you a little of our good cardinal. I send you a letter he has written to you; pray advise him to write his history; it is what all his friends press him much to do. He tells me he is very well pleased with his desert, that he can look upon it without the least horror, and humbly hopes that God will support him in his weakness. He expresses the most sincere regard for you, and desires me not to think of leaving Paris till I have finished all your affairs. He remembers the time when you had the ague, and that he desired me, for his sake, to be careful of your health. I answer him in the same tone; he assures me that the most frightful solitude would not make him forget the friendship he owes us. He was received at St. Michael's * with transports of joy: the people were all on their knees, and received him as a protector sent by God. The troops, who were quartered there, are taken off, the officers having waited on him for his orders to send away or to leave as many as pleased. Cardinal Bonzi has assured me, that the pope, without staying to receive our cardinal's letter, had sent him a brief, to tell him that he supposes, and even desires, he will

* The place of the cardinal's retreat, a remote village in the province of Brittany.

keep his hat; that the preserving his rank and dignity will in no wise impede the work of his salvation: and it is moreover added, that his holiness expressly commanded him not to make choice of any other place of retirement than St. Denis; but I much doubt this latter part of the report, so I only tell you my author for the former part.

I am convinced he thinks no more about the cassolette: if I had desired him not to send it, it would only have served to put him in mind of it, so I thought it was best to take no notice of it. There is no news of importance stirring. Every thing goes on with spirit on M. de Turenne's side.

The other day there was a madame Noblet, of the Vitri family, playing at basset with Monsieur. Mention was made of M. de Vitri, who is very ill: upon which she said to Monsieur, "Ah! sir, I saw him this morning, poor man! his face looked just like a *stratagem*." What could she mean? Madame de Richelieu has received such kind and affectionate letters from the king, that she is more than repaid for what she has done*. Adieu, my dearest and best-beloved.

LETTER CCCXI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, July 10, 1675.

I ASSURE you, my dear child, it has given me the greatest uneasiness, to find that you are under so much concern about my health: alas! my love, you think of nothing else, and your arguments are expressly calculated to make you uneasy. You say I made a mystery of the

* The singular attachment of the queen and madame de Montespan

reason of my being bled, to you; but indeed I am not ill. I have had no vapours: I placed my bleeding more to the account of the business I had to go through, than to the score of my health: I felt a little oppressed. I judged that it was best for me to be bled before I set off, as a sort of security in my journey. The cardinal, whom I used to visit daily, was gone; I saw five or six days of rest before me, and after that the affair of M. de Bellièvre. I wished to devote myself to it entirely, and to your little lawsuit; so I determined to be bled, to be quite at liberty. I did not send you these particulars, because it would have borne the construction of making myself appear of great consequence, and this discretion has given you a thousand pangs: I am grieved at this, my dear child: be assured, however, that I will never deceive you, but abide faithfully by the agreement we have made, not to spare each other on these occasions: I will always let you know how I am without disguise, so trust to me.

And now, my dear, I must acquaint you, that we have gained your little cause with Ventadour. The princesses de Tingri were present at the entry of the judges, and so was I, and we have sent to return thanks. It is a pity that Molière is dead, for he would have made an excellent farce of what has happened at the hotel de Bellièvre. They have refused four hundred thousand francs for that charming house, which twenty merchants would have purchased, because it looks into four streets, and they might have built twenty good houses upon the ground it stands on; but they would not part with it on any terms, because forsooth it is the family house, and the shoes of the old chancellor have touched the threshold, and they are used to the parish church of St. Germain l'Auxerrois; and so for this piece of an-

tiquity, they let the house lie upon hand, and pay twenty thousand livres a year for their lodging.

Madame de Coulanges saw the grand-duchess at Lyons, in the interval of her mother's fits: she says the princess is very much changed, and will be eclipsed by madame de Guise *; she says she had seen you at Pierrelate, and that she thought you extremely handsome: send me some particulars of her journey. You will be the means of my going to see her.

I am now going to answer yours of the third; let us talk a little of our good cardinal. It was not true that the pope had sent him a brief, when madame de Vins wrote you word that he had: but it is confirmed now. It was cardinal Spada who took upon him to assert that it would be so. The good pope, my dear, has done neither better nor worse, than Trivelin † in the play, who wrote and delivered the answer to a letter before the letter was received. We are all heartily rejoiced at it, and d'Hacqueville thinks he will conform to his holiness's will; that he will write to the pope, and tell him the true reasons of his being desirous of laying down the purple, and that he is far from supposing it to be incompatible with his salvation; and that if his holiness persists in commanding him to keep his hat, he will cheerfully acquiesce. So in all probability he will remain our good cardinal still. He finds his solitude agree very well with him; he says so, at least, and we ought to believe him: he did not take a final leave of me; on the contrary, he gave me reason to believe I should see him again, and seemed to take a pleasure, not only in giving me that consolation, but himself likewise. He will retain his equipage, for he can no

* Elizabeth d'Orléans, elder sister of the grand-duchess.

† A character in the Italian comedy.

longer have the modesty of a penitent in this respect, as the princess d'Harcourt says. He writes me a little note now and then, which I preserve with the greatest care; he always mentions you: I would have you write to him on the subject of his hat, and advise him to keep it.

It is said that M. de St. Vallier has married mademoiselle de Ruvroi; the affair of his disgrace was a mere trick. Little St. Valeri is out of danger, as to her life, but we cannot say so much with respect to her beauty. Our coadjutor's good fortune continues as brilliant as ever, and I am of your opinion, that he has more reason to be pleased with his stay in Paris, than with the archbishop of Paris.

You did extremely well in waiting on the duchess, it would have been cruel not to have done it. You are likewise very much in the right to remain at Grignan; it will hasten your husband's return thither: perhaps you will also have madame de Coulanges, Vardes, and Corbinelli. Madame de Coulanges writes me word, that your *hatred* is very convenient, and that she has brought you into a very agreeable train of correspondence. Pray, my dear child, do not thank me for what I do for you and mademoiselle de Méri; rather rejoice with me, that I have the satisfaction of being employed in any thing that relates to your business or your pleasure.

LETTER CCCXII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Tuesday, July 12, 1675.

We have the finest chase in the world, after M. de B*** and M. de M***. They set off, they squat, they run

a length, they turn and wind, but we still keep scent of them; we have excellent noses; we are in full chase, and if once we catch them, as I hope we shall, we shall give them a good drubbing, and then, following the noble practice of good huntsmen, we will leave them there, and never touch them again. I will let you know the end of all this: I have no notion of giving up such an affair; but if I prevent you from being the greatest captain in the world, the abbé* prevents me from being the most active and busy in your affairs; he always gets the start of me, and that, added to his superior abilities, makes him beat more ground than I do. He is out by seven o'clock in the morning, consulting every word, point, and stop, in the transaction. There are some few disputes indeed between mademoiselle de Méri and him, now and then; and what do you think occasions them? Why, the great exactness of the abbé, more than any consideration of interest: for if an affront is offered to arithmetic, or the inviolable rule, that two and two make four, is broken in upon, the poor abbé is beside himself. It is his humour, and he should be indulged in it: on the other side, mademoiselle de Méri is of a different humour; whenever she takes a part in a dispute, she never drops it, but pushes it to the very last; and when the abbé finds himself overpowered by a torrent of words, he falls into a passion, and puts on the uncle, by commanding silence: but this, she says, is not polite. *Polite* is a new affront; every thing is overturned; he will not hear a word more; the main argument is forgotten; and little accidental circumstances are made points of consequence: then I am forced to take the field, and run first to one and then to the other, like the cook in the

* De Coulanges.

play *; but I make rather a better ending, for I set them both laughing, and the conclusion of the matter is, that the next day mademoiselle de Méri returns to our good abbé to ask his advice again; and he as readily gives it, and busies himself to serve her. He has his humours, as I said before, and who among us is free from them? However, I will take upon me to assure you, that there shall never be any thing serious in their disputes, so long as I am a party concerned.

Adieu, my dearest child. I have no news for you. Our cardinal is extremely well; I would have you write to him, and desire him not to waste his time in fruitless replies and expostulations with the court of Rome; but to obey with a good grace, and wear his old hat still, as our fat abbé † says, who, by the by, complains sadly of your silence. M. de la Rochefoucault sends you word that he is perfectly recovered from his gout, and imagines his poverty will return again; for he can find no joy in his riches, while tormented with that disorder.

LETTER CCCXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, July 19, 1675.

Guess from whence I write to you, my dear: from M. de Pomponne's, as you will perceive by the few lines which madame de Vins sends you with this. I have been with her, the abbé Arnauld, and d'Hacqueville, to see the procession of St. Genevieve pass; we returned in very good time; we were back by two o'clock; there are many that will not return till night. Do you

* See the fourth scene of the first act in Molière's Miser.

† The abbé de Pontcarré.

know, that this procession is considered a very fine sight? It is attended by all the religious orders, in their respective habits, the curates of the several parishes, and all the canons of Notre-Dame, preceded by the archbishop of Paris in his pontificals, and on foot, giving his benediction to the right and left, as he goes, till he comes to the cathedral; I should have said to the left only, for the abbé de St. Genevieve marches on the right, barefoot, and preceded by a hundred and fifty monks, barefoot also; the cross and mitre are borne before him, like the archbishop, and he gives his benedictions in the same manner, but with great apparent devotion, humility, and fasting, and an air of penitence, which show that he is to say mass at Notre-Dame. The parliament, in their red robes, and the principal companies, follow the shrine of the saint, which glitters with precious stones, and is carried by twenty men clad in white, and barefoot. The provost of the merchants, and four counsellors, are left as hostages at the church of St. Genevieve, for the return of this precious treasure. You will ask me, perhaps, why the shrine was exposed. It was to put a stop to the continual rains we have had, and to obtain warm and dry weather, which happened at the very time they were making preparations for the procession; to which, as it was intended to obtain for us all kinds of blessings, I presume we owe his majesty's return, who is expected here on Sunday next. In my letter of Wednesday, I will write you all that is worth writing.

M. de la Trousse is conducting a detachment of six thousand men to marshal de Créqui, who is to join M. de Turenne. La Fare and the others remain with the dauphin's gens-d'armes, in the army commanded by the prince. The other day Madame, and madame de Monaco, took d'Hacqueville, at the hotel de Grammont,

to walk about the streets and the Tuilleries incog.; as her highness is not much given to a disposition for gallantry, her dignity sits very easy on her. The Tuscan princess is expected every hour. This is another of the blessings obtained by the shrine of St. Genevieve. I saw one of your letters yesterday to the abbé de Pontcarré; it is the best letter that ever was written: there is no part of it which has not some point, and wit; he has sent a copy of it to his eminence; for the original is kept as sacred as the shrine.

Adieu, my dearest and best-beloved: you are so remarkable for your inviolable love of truth, that I do not abate myself a single expression of your kindness towards me; and you may judge then how happy it makes me.

LETTER CCCXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, July 24, 1675.

The weather is so extremely hot, my dear, that instead of tossing and tumbling in my bed, the whim took me to get up (though it is but five o'clock in the morning) and chat a little with you.

The king arrived at Versailles on Sunday morning; the queen, madame de Montespan, and all the other ladies, went to take possession of their former apartments. In a short time after his arrival, his majesty began to make the usual visits: the only difference is that they play in the state-apartments. I shall have more intelligence before I conclude my letter. The reason of my being so ill informed of what passed at Versailles is, that I came but last night from M. de Pomponne's; madame de Pomponne had invited d'Hacque-

ville and me in so pressing a manner, that there was no refusing. Indeed M. de Pomponne appeared delighted to see us: you were spoken of with all the friendship and esteem imaginable, during the short time we were there, and there was no want of conversation: one of our whims was, to wish we could see through a great many things which we think we understand, but which, in fact, we do not: we should then see into what passes in families, where we should find hatred, mistrust, anger, and contempt, in the room of all those fine things that are set to outward shew, and pass upon the world for realities. I was wishing for a closet hung with mirrors of this kind instead of pictures. We carried this odd notion very far, and diverted ourselves extremely with it. We were for opening d'Hacqueville's head, to furnish ourselves from thence with some of these curious anecdotes; and pleased ourselves with thinking how the world is in general imposed upon by what they see and take for truth. You think that things are so and so in such a house; that such a couple adore each other; but stay awhile, and turn up the cards, and you will see that they hate each other most completely. You would imagine that such an event proceeded from such a cause; the little demon that drew aside the curtain, would undeceive you; and so through life. This afforded us infinite amusement. You see, my dear, I must have plenty of time to entertain you with such trifles: this is the consequence of rising so early in the morning: this is doing as M. de Marseilles does: if it had been winter, I should have visited by torch-light.

You have your cool north-east wind at last: ah! my child, how uncomfortable it is; we are broiling with heat in this country, and in Provence you are starving with cold. I am convinced that our shrine

has effected this change; for before the procession, we discovered, like you, that the sun and the seasons had changed their course: I thought I had discovered too, like you, that this was the true reason that had occasioned the days we so much regret to fly so rapidly: for my part, my dear child, I experience as much sorrow [illegible] days past and gone for ever, as I formerly experienced joy in spending winter and summer, and every season, with you: this painful thought must give way to the hope of seeing you again.

I wait for cooler weather before I take physic, and for cooler councils in Britany * before I venture thither. Madame de Lavardin, de la Troche, M. d'Haroüis, and I, shall consult together about a proper time for our journey, having no design to run ourselves into the midst of the commotions that at present rend our poor province: they seem to increase daily; and those concerned in them have got as far as Fougeres, burning and ransacking all the way as they go along. This is rather too near the *Rocks*. They have begun a second time to plunder the *bureau* † at Rennes: Madame de Chaulnes is terrified almost to death, at the continual menaces she hears. I was told yesterday that some of the mutineers had actually stopped her in her coach, and that even the most moderate of them had sent notice to M. de Chaulnes, who is at Fort Louis, that if the troops he had sent for took a single step towards entering the province, his wife would run the hazard of being torn to pieces by the insurgents. It is necessary, however,

* The exorbitant taxes that had been imposed upon these unhappy people, had obliged numbers of them to have recourse to arms, in order to free themselves from the load of exactions that it was impossible for them to bear.

† A kind of exchequer established in all the principal towns in France, for the collection of the king's revenues.

that some troops should march against them, for things are come to such a height, that lenitives are no longer of service: but, it would not be prudent for us to set out before the storm is a little subsided, and we see the issue of this extreme confusion. It is hoped that the approaching harvest will help to disperse the rioters; for after all they must get in their grain, and there are nearly six or seven thousand of them, not one of whom can speak a word of French.

M. de Boucherat told me the other day, that a curate having received a clock that had been sent him from *France*, as they call this part of the country, in the sight of some of his parishioners, they immediately cried out in their language, that it was a new tax, they were sure of it, they saw it plainly. The good curate, with great presence of mind, and without seeming at all confused, said to them, "My children, you are mistaken, you know not what you are talking of; it is an *indulgence*." This brought them all immediately upon their knees. You may, by this specimen, form a judgement of the understanding of these people. Let the consequence be what it may, I must wait till the hurricane is past; but I am sorry to be obliged to defer my journey: it was fixed at the most convenient time for me, and it cannot be put off without interfering with my plans. You know my resignation to Providence: we must always return to this at last, and take things as they come. I talk wisely, as you see, but I do not always think wisely. You well know there is one point in which I cannot practise what I preach.

Mademoiselle d'Eaubonne was married the day before yesterday. Your brother would willingly resign his ensigncy to be colonel of the regiment of Champagne. It is a post that M. de Grignan has held; but we by no means wish him to make this addition to his

expenses in these unsettled times; it would cost him at least fifteen or sixteen thousand francs. Many officers are returned with the king; the grand-master, messieurs de Soubise, Termes, Brancas, La Garde, Villars, the count de Fiesque, &c.: as for the latter, people are apt to say of him, *di cortesia piu che di guerra amico* *. He had not been a month in the army. M. de Pomponne says that it was impossible to wish more heartily to come to an engagement than the king did, or to be more resolved to march at the head of the first ranks, when they imagined they were likely to have a battle at Limbourg. He gave us an excellent description of his majesty's mode of life, with those about him, especially the prince and the duke. It is pleasant to hear these little details.

The cassolette is arrived, my child; it very much resembles an *indulgence*; it is heavier, and not so beautiful as we fancied it: it is an antique, and is called a cassolette, but it is very badly wrought; it may do at Grignan, but not at Paris: our good cardinal has done by it as he does by his music, praised it without understanding it. You have only now to thank him for it sincerely, and not give him the mortification of thinking you are not charmed with his present; and you must consider it as he wishes you to do, a mere trifle, which it would be very uncivil to refuse. When I desired you to advise him to amuse himself by writing his own history, I did it in compliance with the wishes of his friends, who begged me to try my influence with him on this subject, and they all promised that they would support me with their united remonstrances; that he might see that all who loved him joined in the same sen-

* That he is rather fond of the court than the camp.

timent*. I can assure you he seems to enjoy a very good state of health. Things are no longer with him as they were last winter; a proper regimen, and plain fare, have perfectly restored him. You are very right in what you say on the way in which this affair is spoken of here: I have only heard it reported, not having had the misfortune to meet with any of the persons who reason so well. Thank God I see none but those who consider this action as a very glorious one, and who love him as well as we do. His friends by no means wish him to confine himself to St. Michael, but advise him to go sometimes to Commerci, and sometimes to St. Denis.

The grand-duchess and madame de Sainte-Même have talked a great deal of your beauty. I should have seen the princess if it had not been for our excursion to Pomponne: every body finds her as you represented her, overwhelmed with sorrow. Madame de Montmartre went to meet her at Fontainbleau: they are preparing her a frightful prison.

Madame de Montlouet has the small-pox: her daughter is in great alarm for her; and the mother is no less unhappy that she cannot prevail on her to quit her for an instant, to take a little air, as her physicians have advised her to do. I believe they are neither of them very brilliant in point of understanding, but, in respect to sentiments of tenderness and affection for each other, they are just like you and me. You express yourself so delightfully on the subject of your affection for me, that I dare not undertake to tell you

* It is to the entreaties of the friends of cardinal de Retz, that the public is indebted for the Memoirs of his life, which were printed long after his death with considerable omissions.

how much I am affected by joy, tenderness, and gratitude: but you can easily comprehend it, since you think you know in what degree I love you: your cards turn up well for me. M. de Pomponne said the other day, after owning that there is no certain general rule, "It would seem as if madame de Sévigné passionately loved madame de Grignan; but, do you know the truth? Shall I tell you what the cards say? Why, they say, that she does love her passionately:" to which he might have added, to my eternal glory, "and is as passionately beloved by her."

I have your silks: I wish I could find a person to send them by, for they make too small a parcel for the coach, and too large a one for the post. I think I may say the same of this letter.

LETTER * CCCXV.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO MADAME DE LA FAYETTE.

Paris, Thursday 24 ——†.

You know, my dear, that we do not bathe every day; and during the three days that I did not throw myself into the water, I went to Livri, from whence I returned yesterday, intending to go back again when I shall have finished my dippings, and our abbé settled some little affairs which still detain him here. On the eve of my departure for Livri, I went to see mademoiselle, who caressed me exceedingly; I presented your compliments to her, and she received them very graciously, at least she did not appear to have any thing upon her mind: I went with mademoiselle de Rambouillet, M.

† This letter is without date; but a little attention showed, that it could not have been written later than the summer of 1675, when madame de Sévigné was in her forty-ninth year.

de Valençai, and madame de Lavardin: she is now going to court, and she is so pleased, that she will be in good humour with every one the whole winter. I have no news to send you, for I have not seen the *gazette** these three days. You must have heard, however, that madame de N. is dead, and that her lover, Trevigné, has been almost dead also with grief: for my part, I wish he had died, for the honour of the ladies. I have still eruptions in my face, my poor little dear, for which I am constantly using some remedy; I am in the hands of Bourdelot, who physics me with melons and ice, which every body says will kill me. This idea renders me so irresolute, that though I find myself better for what he orders me, I take it with trembling. Adieu, my dearest; you well know that it is impossible to love you more tenderly than I do.

LETTER CCCXVI.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, July 26, 1675.

I BELIEVE, my dear, I shall write you but a short letter to-day, because it is very late. I am just come from the opera, with M. and madame de Pomponne, the abbé Arnauld †, madame de Vins, madame de la Troche, and d'Hacqueville. This was intended as an entertainment for the abbé Arnauld ‡, who has not seen any

* Madame de Lavardin, who was very fond of news, and went every where in quest of it.

† Elder brother to M. de Pomponne.

‡ Henry Arnauld, uncle to M. de Pomponne, first known by the name of the abbé St. Nicholas, and afterwards by that of bishop of Angers: he was esteemed the most pious prelate in the church of France.

thing of the kind since Urban VIII. when he was at Rome with M. d'Angers; he was very much pleased. I have compliments to make you from all the company, and especially M. de Pomponne: who begs you seriously to depend upon his friendship, notwithstanding your absence.

I saw the grand-duchess yesterday: she exactly answered your description of her. I thought some traces of discontent were legible in her countenance: she had an air of reserve, and melancholy softened with tenderness; but I believe she will soon recover her gaiety and her beauty. She has succeeded very well at Versailles; the king thought her amiable, and will take care to make her spend her time there agreeably. Every one is eager to show the generosity of his sentiments by pitying and praising her. She was delighted with Versailles, and with the caresses of the noble family there; she has not yet seen the Dauphin nor Mademoiselle. As her reputation has never sustained the least blemish, it will be nothing more than charity to seek to amuse her. She talked to me much of you and of your beauty: I told her you still subsisted upon the air of Paris; she believes it, and says there is no living in any other climate. I thought she would never have done talking of the bad supper she gave you†: she was very well pleased with M. de Grignan, and with Ripert, who took so much care of her when her coach was overturned. She thinks madame de C*** the most silly, bold, coquettish, and impertinent woman she ever saw: and yet she has been told that the grand-duchess

† At Pierrelate, a little village of Lower Dauphiné, where madame de Grignan went to pay her respects to the grand-duchess in her way through it.

admired her more than any one in Provence: what vain-glory, and what a falsehood!

I have managed so well that madame de Monaco is always ill; if she had health, she would be obliged to quit the party: her favour with Monsieur and Madame is delightful. I fear madame de Longueron is not very well pleased, and I have done all in my power that she shall not be. You understand and explain the *phantom* admirably; it is now used to express a *stratagem*. Our journey is delayed, as I told you: I shall go with M. d'Harouïs, we shall take our time. Britany is more inflamed than ever. Madame de Chaulnes is not a prisoner, but one of her friends would be very glad that she were at Rennes, because she cannot stir out on account of the disorders that agitate the country.

The court is removing to Fontainbleau; Madame wishes it. It is certain that the friend of Quantova (madame de Montespan) has twice said to his wife and his curate, "Be assured I have not changed my former resolutions; trust to my word, and inform the curious of my sentiments."

Mademoiselle d'Armagnac is married to that Cadaval *: she is very handsome. The chevalier de Lorraine is to perform the ceremony of espousing her; she is much to be pitied for going so far to have the nuptials consummated.

I shall send the airs of the new opera to M. de Grignan very soon; if he be with you I embrace him, and desire him to take the utmost care of you. I do not know whether it was cardinal de Retz who recommended me to take care of your interests; but I am never so well pleased as when I am doing something

* Nugno Alvare Péréira de Mello, duke de Cadaval in Portugal.

for you. His recommendation has a greater effect upon me than his benediction. Let me have an account of all your concerns; nothing is trifling, nothing is indifferent.

LETTER CCCXVII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, July 31, 1675.

What you say of time is excellent. It is true, my child, we see no one stop short in his course because he cannot get through it: we spring from the dust, we return to dust, and time goes on without interruption. I am glad you will remain quietly at Grignan till the end of October. Aix would have appeared strange to you after leaving this place: the solitude and repose of Grignan tranquillises the mind, and you have great need of it. M. de Grignan is sufficient company for you, but your house will be full, and your music improved. I could not help laughing heartily at what you say of the Italian air, and how completely your musicians murder it notwithstanding your instructions: this part of your letter is admirable: I beg M. de Grignan to learn the whole of this air, for my sake, and we will sing it together.

I told you that our foolish Bretons put a stop to my journey for a while. The shrine of St. Genevieve has given us delightful weather. La St. Geran is in the road to heaven; the good La Villars has not received your letter, which is a great grief to her.

I must tell you an adventure that happened a few days ago: a poor lace-maker, in the Fauxbourg St. Marcian, was taxed ten crowns, in consequence of a new impost upon trade-licences; he had not the money;

the collectors pressed him for payment, he begged time, which they refused, and seized his bed, and what few things he had, not leaving him so much as a dish to eat out of; the poor wretch finding himself reduced to this condition, grew perfectly furious, and cut the throats of three of his children, who happened to be in the room with him; his wife fled with the fourth in her arms. He is confined in the Chatelet, and is to be hanged in a day or two: he says he regrets nothing, but the not having killed his wife and the other child which she saved. You may depend on it, my dear, that this is true, and that there has not been such an instance of fury since the siege of Jerusalem.

The court was to have set out yesterday for Fontainbleau, where pleasures were to have been converted into toils by their multiplicity: every thing was ready, when an unexpected blow terminated their joy: the people said it was on account of Quantova: attachment is always in extremes: enough is done to exasperate the curé and every one else, and perhaps not enough for her; for in the midst of her outward triumph, she has inward sorrow.

You speak of the pleasures of Versailles; and at the time Fontainbleau was to be immersed in joy, M. de Turenne is killed, which has occasioned a general consternation. The prince has posted away for Germany, and all France is in desolation. Instead of seeing an end to the campaign, and enjoying the pleasure of your brother's return, we are now more at a loss than ever. This is the world in its glory; these are events truly surprising; you are fond of such, but this I am sure will sensibly affect you. I am a fearful convert to M. Desbrosse's doctrine of predestination: for can we doubt an all-ruling, all-directing Providence, or that the cannon-ball which singled out M. de Turenne from

ten or twelve persons who were round him, was loaded with his death from all eternity? I am going to give an account of this tragic event, in return for that of Toulon. Would to God they were alike!

By all means write to cardinal de Retz, we have all of us written to him; he is very well, and leads a truly religious life: we have advised him to go to Commerci. He will be dreadfully shocked at the death of M. de Turenne. Write likewise to cardinal de Bouillon, who is inconsolable.

Adieu, my dear child, you are too grateful by half: you make quite a sport of speaking ill of your mind: I think you must feel that a finer or more excellent one does not exist: you fear my affection will kill me, but I should be ashamed to add this wrong to my others: let me love you in my own way. You have written a charming letter to M. de Coulanges; I am delighted whenever I have the good fortune to see one of your letters. Every one is looking for his friends, to talk of the death of M. de Turenne. The people gathered in crowds yesterday in the streets, weeping and bewailing the loss of this great man. Every other business but that of sorrow, seems wholly at a stand.

M. de Forbin * is to set out with six thousand men, to punish our poor Britany, that is, in other words, to ruin it: they go by the way of Nantes; for which reason madame de Lavardin and I shall take the road of Mans. We are waiting for a favourable season to set out in. M. de Pomponne told M. de Forbin, that he had some lands in Britany, naming at the same time those that belong to my son.

* Captain-lieutenant of the first company of the king's musketeers, and lieutenant-general in his majesty's armies.

LETTER CCCXVIII.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO MONSIEUR DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, July 31, 1675.

To you, my dear count, I now address myself, to acquaint you with one of the greatest misfortunes that could happen to France; it is the death of M. de Turenne, which I am persuaded will give you as much concern as it has given us. The news reached Versailles on Monday, and the king felt his loss as that of the greatest general, and the best man, in the world. The whole court was in tears at the intelligence, and M. de Condom was near fainting. Every thing was ready for setting out on a party of pleasure to Fontainbleau, but this immediately broke it off: never was there a man more sincerely, or more universally, regretted. All ranks and degrees were in the greatest consternation, and the streets were filled with people who gathered in crowds to lament the loss of their hero. I send you a faithful account of what passed a few days before his death: to a conduct, for the space of three months, which may be deemed almost miraculous, you have only to add the fatal day which at once terminated his glory and his life. He had the pleasure to see the enemy's army decamp and fly before him; and the 27th, which was Saturday, he ascended a little eminence, the better to observe their march: his intention was to attack their rear, and about noon he wrote a letter to the king, informing him of his design, and that he had sent orders to Brissac, to have the prayers of forty hours* said

* A form of prayer in the Roman liturgy, so called.

in the camp. He mentioned in his dispatch the death of young d'Hocquincourt, and added, that he would send a courier to acquaint his majesty with the issue of his undertaking: he sealed his letter, and sent it away at two o'clock. He then went to the top of the hill, attended by eight or ten of the officers, when a ball fired at random by the enemy at a distance, unfortunately entered his body: I leave you to judge what were the cries and lamentations of his army. A courier was instantly dispatched hither, who arrived on Monday, as I told you, so that the king received M. de Turenne's letter, and that containing the news of his death, within an hour of each other. Some time after, one of M. de Turenne's gentlemen arrived, with the news that the armies were very near each other; that M. de Lorges commanded in his uncle's place, and that nothing could exceed the affliction of the army. The king immediately ordered the duke to repair thither post, till the prince could follow in person; whose ill health, and the fatiguing length of the journey, make it probable that bad consequences may happen before he can arrive. God grant he may return in safety. M. de Luxembourg remains in Flanders as commander-in-chief. The lieutenants-general of the prince are messieurs de Duras and de la Feuillade. Marshal de Crequi remains where he was.

The morning after this melancholy news, M. de Louvois proposed to his majesty to repair the loss he had sustained in this gallant leader, by creating eight generals in the room of one: this was certainly the way to lose nothing. At the same time he made eight new marshals of France, to wit, M. de Rochefort *, to whom

* M. de Louvois, being desirous to make M. de Rochefort a marshal of France, could not compass it without proposing the other seven, who were older lieutenants-general than M. de Rochefort.

the others are indebted for their promotions, messieurs de Luxembourg, Duras, La Feuillade, d'Estrades, Navailles, Schomberg, and Vivonne; eight in the whole. I leave you to make your own reflections on this part of my narrative. The grand-master* was in despair at being omitted; but they have made him a duke: of what service, however, is that dignity to him? He has the honours of the Louvre already, in virtue of his place: he will not be admitted to the parliament, on account of consequences; and his wife will accept of a tabouret no where but at Bouillé†; however, it is a favour; and, if he were a widower, he might perhaps marry some young rich widow. You know the count de Grammont hates Rochefort. I saw him yesterday; he was ready to burst with rage: he has written him a letter, and acquainted the king with it. The letter is as follows:

MONSEIGNEUR,

Favour can obtain as much as merit‡; I shall therefore say no more.

Adieu, Rochefort.

The Count de GRAMMONT.

I fancy you will see this compliment in the same light as we do.

I have seen an almanack, of Milan, I think, where in the month of July you read, "The sudden death of a

* The count de Lude, grand-master of the ordnance.

† The countess de Lude was remarkable for passing all her time in the country, through her extravagant fondness for the diversion of hunting.

‡ A verse in the Cid.

great man;" and in the month of August, "Ah! what do I see?" We live in continual alarm here; but, however, the six thousand men are gone to ruin Britany: two Provençals are charged with the commission; the bailli de Forbin, and the marquis de Vins. M. de Pomponne has recommended our poor lands to them. M. de Chaulnes and M. de Lavardin are in perfect despair: these are in the list of disagreeables. If ever you play the fool in your province, I should never wish them to send Bretons to correct you. See how far my heart is from harbouring revenge.

This, my dear count, is all the news that is stirring: and in return for a delightful letter, I send you one which cannot fail of giving you the greatest sorrow: believe me, I am as much concerned as you can possibly be. We have passed a whole winter in hearing of the divine qualities of this hero! Never did man approach so near perfection. The more he was known, the more he was esteemed, and the more he will be regretted.

My dear children, I embrace you both cordially: I pity you, that you have nobody with whom you can talk of this great event. It is natural to be fond of communicating one's thoughts on such an occasion. If you are grieved, it is no more than we all are here.

LETTER CCCXIX.

TO MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, August 2, 1675.

I CANNOT help thinking, my dear, of the astonishment and grief you have felt at the death of M. de Turenne. Cardinal de Bouillon is inconsolable: he heard it from a gentleman of Louvigny's, who, willing to be the first

to make his compliments of condolence on the occasion, stopped his coach, as he was coming from Pontoise to Versailles. The cardinal did not know what to make of his discourse; and the gentleman, on his part, finding he knew nothing of the matter, made off as fast as he could. The cardinal immediately dispatched one of his people after him and soon learned the fatal news, at which he fainted: he was carried back to Pontoise; where he has been these two days without eating a morsel, passing his whole time in tears and lamentations. Madame de Guénégaud and Cavoye have been to see him; who are no less afflicted than himself. I have just written him a note, which I think pretty good. I informed him of your grief upon the occasion, both from the interest you take in all that concerns him, and from your esteem and admiration for the deceased hero. Pray do not forget to write to him yourself, for I think you write particularly well on such subjects: in this case, indeed, you have nothing to do, but give a loose to your pen. Paris is in a general consternation of grief at this great loss. We wait in great anxiety for another courier from Germany. Montécuculi, who was retreating, is returned back; and, doubtless, hopes to profit not a little, by an event so favourable for him. It is said the troops uttered cries of grief that might have been heard at the distance of two leagues, when news was brought them of their general's death. No consideration could stop them: they insisted upon being led immediately to the fight; they were resolved to avenge the death of their father, their leader, their protector, and defender; while he was with them, they said, they feared no danger, and were determined to avenge his death: "So lead us on," they cried, "think not to stop us; we are bent for the fight." This I had from a gentleman who belonged to M. de Turenne, and

was sent from the camp to his majesty. He was bathed in tears while he related this, and all the time that he spoke of the circumstances of his master's death. The ball struck M. de Turenne directly across the body. You may easily imagine he fell from his horse, and expired; but he had just life enough left to crawl a step or two forwards, and clinch his hands in the agonies of death; and then a cloak was thrown over the body. Boisguyot, which is the name of the person who gave us this account, never quitted him till he was carried, with as little noise as possible, to the nearest house. M. de Lorges was about a league distant from the place where the accident happened; judge what must be his feelings when he heard of it. His is the chief loss, who must take charge of this army, and be answerable for all events, till the arrival of the prince, who cannot join him in less than three weeks. I think, twenty times a day, of the poor chevalier de Grignan: he certainly will never be able to support this loss, without losing his reason. Indeed, every one who knew and loved M. de Turenne, is greatly to be pitied.

The king said yesterday, in speaking of the eight new marshals that had been made, that, if Gadagne had had a little patience, he should have been of the number; but, as he thought fit to be out of patience and retire, it was very well as it was. They say, the count d'Estrées is endeavouring to dispose of his place, being one of those who are disappointed at not having had a staff. Guess what Coulanges is doing: he is copying word for word, and without being the least tired, all the news I have written you. I told you the grand-master was made a duke: he dare not complain; he is to be a marshal of France the first opportunity; and the manner in which the king spoke to him, has done him infinitely more honour, than the dignity he has con-

ferred on him. His majesty ordered him to give Pomponne his name and qualifications: "Sire," replied he, "I will give him the patent conferred on my grandfather, and he will have nothing more to do, than to have that copied." We must congratulate him. M. de Grignan will have a great deal to do upon all these promotions; and it is not unlikely he may make himself some enemies: for our new dignitaries aspire to the title of Monseigneur; and will not be convinced of the injustice of their claim.

But, to return to M. de Turenne. When he took leave of cardinal de Retz, he spoke to him thus: "Sir, I make no professions, it is not my way; but let me beg you seriously to believe me, when I tell you, that were it not for the present state of affairs, in which I may perhaps be wanted, I would follow your example: and I give you my word, that, if I live to return, I will think of my salvation in time; and, as you have done, set apart some few moments between life and death." I had this from d'Hacqueville not two days ago. The cardinal will be very much affected at his death. It seems to me, my child, as if I could not tire you by talking of him: we agree that there are some things of which we cannot know too much. I embrace M. de Grignan: I wish you had some one with you to whom you could talk of M. de Turenne: the Villars adore you; Villars is returned, but St. Geran and his head remain behind. His wife was in hopes that they would have had some pity on him and brought him back with the rest. I suppose La Garde has acquainted you with his design of paying you a visit. I long to take my leave of him for that journey. Mine, as you know, is put off for some time. We must wait to see what effect the march of six thousand men, commanded by two Provençals, will produce in our country. It is

very hard for M. de Lavardin, to have given 400,000 francs for his place, and to be obliged to command under M. de Forbin; for M. de Chaulnes still retains the shadow of first commander. Madame de Lavardin and M. d'Harouis are the compasses by which I steer my course. Be under no concern about me, my dear, nor my health: I shall take medicine after the full moon, and when I have had news from Germany. Adieu! my dearest child. I love you so passionately, that if any one was desirous of obtaining my affection, he might think himself well off if I loved him only as much as I do your picture.

LETTER CCCXX.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, August 7, 1675.

Is it true, my dear, that I did not mention St. Marcel, in my description of the procession of St. Geneviève? I cannot imagine how I could be guilty of such an omission. St. Marcel came to fetch St. Geneviève as far as his own chapel, otherwise the laws of decorum would not have permitted her to advance a step towards him. The shrine of this saint was carried by the company of goldsmiths, who had ornamented it with an infinite variety of precious stones, valued at nearly two millions: it was the finest sight in the world. The saint followed next, carried on the shoulders of her dutiful children barefoot, in all the pomp of devotion. When they returned from Notre-Dame, the gentleman saint reconducted the lady saint, to a place appointed, where they always separate: but can you imagine with what violence? The efforts they made to rejoin each other were so great, that the number of men to carry

them was increased by ten on each side; and if by chance they had met, no human force could have separated them. If you do not believe this, you need only ask the good citizens of Paris, who were all witnesses of it. This however was prevented; so they only made a civil bow to each other, and retired each to his own habitation. I wonder what I could be thinking of, that I forgot to mention this miraculous story.

I have told you, that I am not going to Britany. You will easily believe, that I shall not go till I have settled our correspondence by our new friend at the post-office: we shall hear from each other twice a week; it is my life every where, but at the *Rocks* I should certainly die if I had not this consolation. I shall carry with me books and work; but these amusements are not to be compared to the pleasure of our correspondence, which is my principal one.

Your letters respecting the army will be unintelligible till you know the death of M. de Turenne. Every thing is in confusion: there is now no hope of any good from Flanders, or from Germany, or of your brother's arrival. We shall see in a few days how things will turn out, what train affairs will take in our province, and how M. de Fourbin will conduct his little army. I advise you to write to our good cardinal upon the loss we have sustained: he will be gratified by your attention: it was said the other day in a place of considerable consequence that they knew but two men who were superior to all the rest of mankind, the cardinal and M. de Turenne; the cardinal now stands alone on this eminence.

Your madame de Schomberg is become the wife of a marshal *; it is very laudable in her to remain in Lan-

* M. de Schomberg was one of the eight marshals who were created on the thirtieth of June preceding: he then commanded in Catalonia.

guedoc in order to be nearer Catalonia: perhaps her health makes her stay there necessary. It would be a pretty excursion for M. de Grignan, and La Garde, to pay her a visit at the waters. All this will perhaps make her husband remove.

The chevalier de Buous is perfectly satisfied with me. I am his ambassador at the house of M. de Pomponne. Guilleragues has performed wonders in his gazette*; but I find his last praises somewhat confused. I should prefer a more natural and less studied style. My son tells me, he can easily comprehend the miserable condition of the army in Germany, by what his own suffers; but that they are happy however in being left under M. de Luxembourg, since the prince is taken from them. Poor madame de Vaubrun is in despair at the death of her husband†; M. d'Haroüis wept yesterday both for himself and for her. I saw count de Fiesque and some others the other day at mass, who certainly do not appear there with a good grace. I thought those mothers happy, whose sons were neither at the Minims ‡ nor in Germany; I mean myself, who have the satisfaction of knowing that my son is doing his duty, without being in danger at present.

The other day the dauphin was shooting at a mark, and shot very wide of it: M. de Montausier rallied him upon it; and told the marquis de Crequi, who is very skilful, to fire, saying to the dauphin, "See how well he will hit the mark." The arch youth had the

* She refers to an eulogium on M. de Turenne, which was inserted in the Gazette de France on the occasion of his death. Guilleragues had the management of the gazette, which was then a new thing.

† The marquis de Vaubrun had just been killed at the battle of Altenheim.

‡ That is, at mass at the Minims of the Place-Royale, which madame de Sévigné generally attended.

complaisance to shoot a foot farther from it than the dauphin, which turned the laugh on M. de Montausier: "Ah! little wretch," said he, "you deserve to be hanged." M. de Grignan must remember this young courtier well; he has told us similar anecdotes of him.

You ought to read the Crusades; you would there see an Adhémar de Monteil, and a Castellane, for your choice *: they are both heroes. I want to read Tasso again, after having read that book. I have at last seen M. de Peruis: he seems delighted with you and M. de Grignan: I think him a very worthy man, mild in his manners and sincere. We chatted a full hour about Provence, on which subject I still find myself very learned. He is charmed with your portrait; I wish mine were a little less vulgar: it seems to me that it can neither be viewed with pleasure nor affection. The good d'Heudicourt is delighted with your letter: she can tell you some very good and very extraordinary things: her correspondence will be very entertaining to you. I made Peruis tell me where he found you, at what time, in what place: I recognised you in your bed, lazy creature! He says you are handsome, fair, and plump: I dared not question him farther. I prefer the conversation of a man who comes from Grignan, and who talks of you, to that of every other person: I could scarcely leave him.

I shall scold Corbinelli for not writing to you: what folly! what has he better to do? Alas! I have just heard that the poor fellow has been near death: he has

* Blanche Adhémar de Monteil espoused Gaspard de Castellane, in 1498. Their son, Gaspard de Castellane, was heir to Louis Adhémar de Monteil, count de Grignan, his uncle, who, dying without issue, entailed on him the name and arms of Adhémar; so that the counts de Grignan, who have since borne the name of Adhémar de Monteil, and which title is now extinct, were originally of the house of Castellane.

had such violent head-aches, accompanied with fever, as to render him delirious. He has signed his name at the bottom of a letter which he has had written to inform me that he is not dead, but that he has been in great danger, and that I have been on the point of losing the truest friend I have in the world: I had rather he had not justified himself so well with respect to you. Say something kind to him for my sake; I love him, and am convinced of his friendship for me.

I have been at Versailles, I am not certain whether I have before told you so; d'Hacqueville and I went there together: we set out at three o'clock, and went straight to M. de Louvois', whom we found at home. This seemed to me as lucky a circumstance as throwing into the treize at trou-madame. I spoke to him for my son; he cannot have the regiment, because the officer who has the command of it is not dead. This minister said a thousand civil things to me; I told him how tired we were of the ensigncy; in short, all went well: we got into our carriage again, and were at Paris at nine o'clock. I have since been at Versailles with madame de Verneuil, to pay, as it is called, her court. M. de Condom is not yet reconciled to the death of M. de Turenne. Cardinal de Bouillon is so altered, I should scarcely have known him: he caught sight of me, and, fearing he should weep, turned away instantly: I did the same, for I was very much affected. The ladies that attend the queen, are the companions of madame de Montespan also. They play and sup together by turns, and have entertainments of music every evening. Nothing is concealed, or so much as pretended to be made a secret of; they are seen in triumph in the public walks together; and there is no appearance of discontent.

I have been at Clagny: how shall I express my ad-

miration of it! It is the enchanted palace of Armida. The building advances so rapidly, that you may see it grow under your eye: the gardens are finished. You are well acquainted with Notre's* manner of gardening. He has left the wood standing, which has an admirable effect, and has planted a grove of orange-trees in large tubs, and tall enough to supply a shade; it is divided into walks and alleys, bounded by palisadoes on each side, interwoven with roses, jessamin, tuberoses, and pinks. This flowery fence concealing the tubs in which the orange-trees are planted, makes them appear to grow out of the ground; and the appearance of a natural orange-grove in our climate, is the most beautiful, the most surprising, the most enchanting novelty that can be imagined: it is very much admired. I saw La Garde yesterday evening, who told me, that a person from the army had said very fine things to the king of the chevalier de Grignan and his regiment: he is very well; God keep him so!

I must give you a peep behind the curtain, that will surprise you. The perfect friendship between Quantova (madame de Montespan), and her travelling friend †, has been converted, for these two years, into the most inveterate hatred. It is an acrimony, an antipathy, a contrariety like that of white and black. You ask, from whence it proceeds. From the friend's haughtiness, that makes her revolt against the orders of Quantova. She does not love to obey; she is willing to comply with the father, but not with the mother. It is to oblige him, that she undertakes this journey, and not

* A famous gardener. It was he that laid out the gardens of the Thuilleries and Versailles.

† Madame de Maintenon, who had taken the young duke of Maine to Anvers, to put him under the care of a quack, who sent him back worse than he came.

in the least to gratify her; she gives an account of every thing that passes to him, and not to her. He is scolded for having too much love for this proud woman; but it is thought it will not continue, unless the aversion ceases, or the success of this journey causes a revolution in the hearts of certain persons. This secret has been rolling, like an earthquake, under ground, these six months; it begins to take air, and will, I think, cause you some surprise. The friends of the female friend are much concerned at it, and it is thought that two of them have felt the ill effects of this misunderstanding. Do not you wonder how it happens that we reason sometimes without being able to comprehend the real state of things? I often say on those occasions, that a thread has been left out: we do not see clearly, till the curtain is removed, and it is then the most amusing thing in the world to observe our own mistakes. A great lady * could tell you, if she pleased, how soon, and how completely, the hero has been forgotten, in a certain house: it is quite scandalous. You know it is necessary to make use of ciphers.

I expect, with impatience, the letters of the chevalier de Grignan; we want fresh advices every hour, for we shall always be in pain till our army has repassed the Rhine. I have sent you an account of the battle of M. de Lorges †, who has shown himself worthy of his uncle. Heaven grant our successes may continue: I believe they are owing to the ghost of M. de Tu-

* Apparently madame d'Houdicourt. The *house* where Turenne was so completely forgotten is the court. It is well known that he was hated by Louvois, and that the king appeared often embarrassed at the claims of the hero upon his gratitude.

† Guise-Alphonse Durfort, count de Lorges, afterwards duke and marshal of France, was the son of Elizabeth de la Tour de Bouillon, sister of M. de Turenne.

renne, which still hovers about the army, and conducts it.

The count de Lude is here; he is created a duke. No one has ever thought of censuring his return; but there are some young men who appear at mass, who deserve to have their ears pulled. If we could have exchanged our standard for the regiment of Champagne, well and good; but Montgaillard is not dead, and he wants money; this is what M. de Louvois told me, adding, that I was too prudent a woman to purchase a regiment, when I could not get rid of the other situation.

Madame de Saint Valeri will be marked. I have contrived that her pretty nose shall be spoiled: madame de Monaco is still indisposed: how much you are obliged to me! I am like you; I pardon the mind in favour of the sentiments. I must retract what I said of madame de Langeron: she is more afflicted than ever: she is like the shadow of the duchess, but she never speaks a word; she neither hears nor answers: she weeps incessantly, and her eyes are so red, that it is scarcely possible to recognise her. The duke is here for a day; he will rejoin the prince, who marches slowly with four or five thousand men: he has taken this opportunity to see the king and the duchess. Madame de Langeron was dreadfully shocked at seeing him. I do not understand love as a profession, better than you do: this summer, it is nothing but the opera, where Mars and Venus agree so well together. These are the first acts of the opera; if you wish to know more, you must ask M. de Boissy, who will require no other reward than to be mentioned in this letter. I have received one from Corbinelli, who is recovered; he has been very ill: he is going to Grignan, at which I am very glad; you will talk of me, and be good companions. Adieu, my dearest, loveliest child. I believe you love me, and

that I have nothing now to learn upon the subject of your affection, which is as sincere as my own.

I am now going to answer your letter of the last of July. Your correspondence, my dear, is excellent; our letters are conversations; I speak to you, and you answer me: I admire your attention and exactness; but I desire you, not to make it a law to yourself; for if it causes the least inconvenience to you, or the slightest head-ache, believe me, whatever is comfort to you, will be pleasure to me: for, without the smallest exaggeration, your interest, your pleasure, your health, hold the first rank amongst the things that are nearest to my heart.

I shall begin with my health: my dear, I desire you not to make yourself uneasy about it. I often see M. de Lorme at madame de Montmort's, whom he is raising from the dead. He approves the remedies I have used, and advises me not to take medicine, judging that I am perfectly out of danger of a fresh attack of the vapours I had last year: the little remembrances I have had from them, have been only their last adieu on taking leave of me: so trifling an attack proves the goodness of my constitution. He would have me take some powders before I go: but it will be more out of complaisance to him than any real occasion for them. If you had heard him give his opinion of me, you would have been relieved from all anxiety on my account for the remainder of your life and mine. I hope you will rest satisfied with his judgement, and no longer count this inquietude for my health among the effects of your tenderness for me; enough will remain besides.

As to the proposal of my going to Grignan instead of Britany, the thought has occurred to me; and whenever I would amuse myself with pleasing reveries, the first thing that presents itself to me is your [illegible]

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seat. The tour you propose to me is so pleasant, and so far practicable, that I shall carry the idea of it with me to Britany, and often entertain myself with it in my woods; but for this year, the abbé says it is out of the question: I have other business here besides the affair of madame d'Acigné: I have the good abbé, who will not be always with me; I have my son, who would be very much surprised to find me at Lambesc at his return; I should be very glad to see him married: be assured, however, that the desire and the hope of seeing you again, never quit me for a moment, and that they preserve my health, and the little happiness that still remains to me: we must therefore season our plans.

The sermon you preached to me on the evening before your departure, is still fresh in my memory; but as I cannot recall it to my thoughts, without fancying I see you entering my chamber, and I have no longer the joy or the hope of so pleasing an interview, it always costs me a tear; and whenever I retrace in my mind the whole of that evening, the remembrance is imbittered with insupportable grief. All we did the last days we were together, all the places we frequented, all the sorrows I concealed beneath a cheerful countenance, for fear of renewing your exhortations, all this is still imprinted in my heart. I live over all the time again; in such a month we were at Livri; every season restores some past scene to my deluded thoughts. My love for you is attended with a numerous train of uneasinesses; a continual absence joined with tenderness, ill consists with quiet and tranquillity in a heart organised like mine. But I must pass over these thoughts without dwelling too much on them. You see the state of mind I am in; and I perceive, my dear, that you smile at me. But what say you to my letter? I love to be always conversing with you, and since it does not dis-

please you, and gives me so much pleasure, what harm can there be in it? Adieu once more, my dear; believe me truly and solely yours.

LETTER *CCCXXI.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

Paris, August 6, 1675.

I SHALL say no more of my daughter's departure, though it is a subject upon which I think incessantly. I shall never be able to reconcile myself to the idea of living without her: but I must keep this sorrow to myself. You ask me where I am, how I am, and in what way I amuse myself. I am at Paris. I am in good health, and I amuse myself with trifles. But this style is laconic; I will be more diffuse. I should now be in Britany, where I have a thousand affairs to transact, if it were not for the commotions that disturb it. Six thousand men are going thither, commanded by M. de Forbin. The question is, what will be the effect of this chastisement. I wait to know, and if repentance seize the rebels, and they return to their duty, I shall resume the thread of my journey, and spend part of the winter there.

I have had many attacks of the vapours; and the health, which you have formerly seen so robust, has sustained shocks, that have humbled me as much as if I had received an insult.

With my mode of life you are sufficiently acquainted. I pass my time with five or six female friends whose society pleases me, and in the performance of a thousand necessary duties, which are no trivial concern. But what vexes me is, that the days pass away even

when we do nothing, and that we grow old, and die. I find great fault with this. Life is too short: scarcely is our youth passed, before we find ourselves in old age. I could wish to have a hundred years certain, and to leave the rest to chance. Should you not like this too, my dear cousin? But how is it to be attained? My niece will be of my opinion. If she is happy in her marriage, she will inform us of it; if not, she will be silent upon the subject. Whatever be the event, there is no pleasure, no comfort, no happiness, that I do not wish her, in this change in her situation. I often talk upon the subject with my niece the nun: she is very agreeable, and her turn of mind often reminds me of you. I cannot pay her a higher compliment.

You are an excellent almanac: you predicted, like one of the trade, all that happened in Germany; but you did not foresee the death of M. de Turenne, nor the cannon-ball shot at random, which singled him out from ten or twelve others. I, who see the hand of Providence in every thing, behold this cannon loaded from all eternity*. I observe that every thing concurred to lead M. de Turenne to the fatal spot, and I do not consider the event so dreadful, supposing him to be in a fit situation to die. What more was necessary? He died in the arms of Glory. His reputation could not be greater: even at the moment of his death, he had the pleasure of seeing his enemies retire, and of witnessing the fruit of his conduct for three months. Long life will sometimes obscure the star of fame. It is always safest to cut to the quick, and especially with heroes whose actions are so scrutinised. If the count d'**** had died after the taking of **** or the relief

* It is pleasing to observe, that she felt the beauty of this expression, and made use of it to more than one of her friends.

of ****, and the marshal de ****† after the battle of ****, would they not have been more renowned? M. de Turenne did not feel the pain of death: do you reckon that as nothing? You know the general grief occasioned by his loss, and the creation of eight new marshals of France in consequence of it.

Vaubrun was killed in the last action, which loaded M. de Lorges with honours: we must see the end of this. We shall be in continual alarm till we know whether our troops have repassed the Rhine. Then, as the soldiers say, we shall be all confounded together, with only the river between us. Madame de Grignan is at her country-seat. What a fate is mine! Providence! Providence! Adieu, my dear count. My dear niece, adieu. I beg a thousand remembrances to M. and madame de Toulonjon. I like the little countess extremely. I was not at Montelon a quarter of an hour before we were as good friends as if we had known each other all our lives: it was because she has great quickness of understanding, and we had no time to lose. My son remains in Flanders: he will not go to Germany. I have thought of you a thousand times since all these events have taken place.

LETTER *CCCXXII.

FROM THE COUNT DE BUSSY TO MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Chaseu, August 11, 1675.

I RECEIVED your letter yesterday, which, long as it is, I assure you, my dear madam, I thought too short. Whether your style be, as you say, laconic, or whether it be diffuse, your letters, in my opinion, contain charms

† Who the count d' **** is, we do not know; but the other is marshal du Plessis-Praslin, who beat Turenne at Rhetel.

that are no where else to be found; and it cannot be said, that it is my friendship for you that embellishes them, since persons of discernment, who are not acquainted with you, have admired them equally. This is praise enough for the present. Eulogiums ought not to be like your letters: to be good, they cannot be too short. You shall pass, you say, the winter in Britany: that is very kind to madame de Grignan. It is plain that, in her absence, all countries are alike to you. I pity you for being subject to the vapours. It is a disagreeable, rather than a dangerous disorder, but it is still to be dreaded. It is sorrow that gives birth to it, and fear that nourishes and increases it. It would be much less, if we did not fancy it would kill us. We must not, therefore, believe this, for in reality it has not the power. I agree with you, that life is too short: a hundred years certain would be a reasonable time. You ask me what we should do to attain this period. After mature reflection, these are all the means I can discover, not indeed to preserve life with any degree of certainty, but, apparently, to prolong it: To sleep little, to eat little, and to have no fear of death; to be grave sometimes, and sometimes gay; for if we were always employed in pleasure, life would be too short, and if we were always sad, we should soon die of grief. Mademoiselle de Bussy is of my opinion, and intends to follow this regimen. Though her husband should not be every thing she could wish, she is determined not to die a day the sooner. She will, in that case, she says, endeavour to outlive him.

LETTER CCCXXIII.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

Paris, Friday, Aug. 9. 1675.

As my note of Wednesday was so very short, I forgot many things I had to say to you. M. Boucherat writes me word, that the coadjutor did wonders at a conference held at St. Germain on Monday night, upon the affair of the clergy in his diocese. The bishops of Condom and of Agen told me the same, when I was at Versailles. I am persuaded he will acquit himself as well in his speech to the king; so that he will always merit our praise.

Our poor friends have repassed the Rhine very happily, after having beaten the enemy. This is very much to the honour of M. de Lorges. We all wish the king may send him a marshal's staff, after an action so noble, so useful, and of which he alone has the merit. His horse was killed under him by a ball, which passed between his legs; so that it may be said that he was mounted on a cannon-ball. Providence, however, directed it, and many others. We lost in this action the marquis de Montbrun, and perhaps M. de Monlort, brother to the prince d'Harcourt, your cousin-german. The loss of the enemy was very great by their own confession: they had four thousand men killed. We lost but seven or eight hundred. The duke de Sault, the chevalier de Grignan, and the cavalry under their command, distinguished themselves. The English performed things almost incredible. In a word, we have been very fortunate. It is said that M. de Montecuculi, after having sent his compliments to M. de Lorges, and expressed his grief for the loss of so great a general,

informed him, that he might repass the Rhine without molestation; that he would not expose his reputation to the rage of an army inflamed with grief for the loss of their beloved general, and to the valour of young Frenchmen, which nothing could resist in their first impetuosity. In reality, the engagement was not general; and only the troops which attacked us were defeated. Many courtiers, whom I dare not, in prudence, name, have signalised themselves in mentioning M. de Lorges to the king, and in stating the reasons which ought to make him immediately a marshal of France, but without effect. He has only the government of Alsace, and a pension of twenty thousand livres, which Vaubrun had. Ah! this is not what he wanted. The count d'Auvergne has the situation of colonel-general of the cavalry, and the government of Limousin. Cardinal de Bouillon is very much grieved.

Our good cardinal has written again to the pope, telling him, that he cannot but hope, that when his holiness had seen the reasons that influence him, he would yield to his most humble prayers to receive his resignation: but we believe that the pope, who is infallible, and who does nothing in vain, will not so much as read his letter, having written his answer beforehand, like our little friend whom you know.

Let us talk of M. de Turenne; it is long since we mentioned him. Do you not wonder that we think ourselves happy in having repassed the Rhine, and that what we should have been grieved at, if he had been living, seems a happiness now he is no more? See what the loss of one man will effect.

Let me call your attention to something that appears to me extremely noble: I can fancy myself to be reading the Roman History. St. Hilaire, lieutenant-general of the artillery, stopped M. de Turenne, who was going

another way, to show him a battery: it was just as if he had said, "Pray, sir, stop a little, it is here you are to be killed." A ball took off the arm of St. Hilaire, who was pointing to the battery, and killed M. de Turenne. The son of St. Hilaire * threw himself upon his father, weeping and lamenting. "Hold your peace, my son," said he: "see," pointing to M. de Turenne who lay dead, "see here a loss that must be wept eternally; a loss that is irreparable." Without paying the least attention to himself, he was wholly taken up in lamenting this great man. The nobleness of the sentiment drew tears of admiration from M. de la Rochefoucault.

M. de Turenne's gentleman, who is returned again from the army, says that the chevalier de Grignan has performed the most heroic actions; that he returned five times to the charge; that his cavalry forced the enemy to retreat, and that his uncommon vigour decided the fate of the battle. M. de Boufflers also acted nobly, as did the duke de Sault, and particularly M. de Lorges, who proved himself the nephew of a hero. I return to the chevalier de Grignan, and cannot help wondering that he has not been wounded, in pushing forward so much as he has done into the very heart of the enemy. M. de Turenne had clothed at his own expense an English regiment, and there were only nine hundred francs found in his coffer. His body is carried to Turenne: many of his people, and even of his friends, have followed it. The duke de Bouillon is returned, the chevalier de Coislin because he is ill; but the chevalier de Vendome, on the very eve of the battle: every one exclaims at this, and even the beauty of madame de

* Afterwards lieutenant-general of the artillery, and of the king's army in the room of his father.

Lude * does not excuse him. The duke de Villeroi is inconsolable at the death of M. de Turenne. He writes that it is not in the power of fortune to do him any farther harm, after having deprived him of the pleasure of being loved and esteemed by such a man.

LETTER CCCXXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, Aug. 12, 1675.

I SEND you one of the most charming accounts we have yet had of the death of M. de Turenne: it is from the young marquis de Feuquières to madame de Vins, and was written for M. de Pomponne. This minister tells me it is a better account than the king received: it is true, that this little Feuquières † has a spice of Arnauld in his head, which makes him write better than any of our courtiers.

I am just returned from a visit to cardinal de Bouillon. He is so altered, you would hardly know him: he asked much after you, and does not in the least doubt your feeling upon the occasion. He told me several affecting anecdotes of M. de Turenne. This great man was certainly very fit to die: for his life had been a continued scene of innocence and integrity. He asked the cardinal, at Whitsuntide, whether he might not communicate without previous confession. His nephew answered him in the negative; because he could not be assured that he had committed no offence against God

* Canoness of Poussai. It appears that this lady was afterwards beloved by the king.

† Anthony de Pas, marquis de Feuquières, author of the *Mémoires sur la Guerre*. He was the grandson of Anne Arnauld, the aunt of M. Arnauld d'Andilli.

since Easter: M. de Turenne then informed him of his situation; he was a thousand leagues distant from the commission of any mortal sin. However he went to confession, in compliance with custom: "But," says he, "must I confess to Recolet, as to M. de St. Gervais? Is it the same thing?" In truth, his was a soul worthy of heaven: it was too nearly allied to God, and had preserved itself too incorruptly, not to return to him immediately. He was extremely fond of M. d'Elbeuf's son *, who is a little miracle of valour, at fourteen years of age. He sent him last year to pay his respects to M. de Lorraine, who said to him, "My little cousin, you are too happy in being able to see and hear M. de Turenne every day: you have no father, no friend, no relation, but this great man: kiss his footsteps as he passes, and think it a happiness to die at his feet." The poor child is almost dead with grief; but grief of reason more than of childishness, which it is feared may prove fatal to him. The count d'Auvergne has taken him with him; for he has nothing to expect from his father. Cavoye is afflicted in form. The duke de Villeroi has written home letters, in the excess of his grief, expressed in such strong terms, as make it necessary to conceal them. He acknowledges no fortune, no favour, superior to that of having been beloved by this hero; and declares, that he now holds in contempt the esteem and favour of every human being, let what will come of it. M. de Marsillac has signalised himself with respect to M. de Lorges, by declaring, that he merited a much greater reward than the spoils of M. de Vaubrun. Certainly nothing could have been more edifying, nothing more encouraging, as an example, than to have

* Henry de Lorraine, duke d'Elbeuf, son of Charles of Lorraine and Elizabeth de la Tour de Bouillon, M. de Turenne's niece.

sent him a marshal's staff, in return for such great success.

Madame de Coulanges sends me word how easily you will be comforted if she spend the winter at Lyons, and how glad she is that you are at your seat. I inform her in general of the commissions you send me, which proceed from the same kind intention; sometimes to prevent the one from receiving consolation, and sometimes that the other may be marked with the small-pox and be ill; in short, I tell her what pains I take to execute your commissions. She writes us admirable letters, and often speaks of the delightful *hatred* that subsists between you.

The chevalier de Lorraine is retired to an abbey he has in Picardy: madame de Monaco met him at Chilli; but could not dissuade him from going. He is thought to be a little out in his politics: and it is imagined that he will find himself caught. It is somewhat extraordinary to desire a principal officer to be dismissed, whose conduct has given satisfaction*; and yet he sets his return at no less a price. He might perhaps have been indulged some years ago; but the times are altered: we are not fickle for having changed once. It is not true that the marquises d'Effiat and Volonne have resigned, but as they accompanied the chevalier to Chilli, it is probable they will feel disgust while this disgrace lasts. La Garde will have told you what M. de Louvois said to madame Langlée; and how well pleased his majesty is with the conduct of the chevalier de Grignan. If there is any happiness for a man in this life, he must certainly enjoy it, in the glory he has acquired on this occasion; not a relation, nor even an indiffer-

* By this officer is meant Monsieur, whom the chevalier de Lorraine governed as a master, or rather as a mistress.

ent person, mentions him but in terms of the highest encomium: had it not been for his breast-plate, he had been a dead man. He received a number of blows upon that blessed cuirass: he never wore one before. Providence! Providence!

When the news came of the death of M. de Turenne, a servant of the archbishop of Rheims awoke him, at five o'clock in the morning, to acquaint him with it: he asked if the army was defeated; he told him, no: upon which he reproved his valet-de-chambre for waking him, called him *rascal*, drew his curtains again, and resumed his nap *. Farewell! child. What can I say after this?

I send you this account at five o'clock in the evening; I make up my packet alone. M. de Coulanges has been here, and would copy it. I hate that beyond measure. I have remembered you to M. de Pomponne, and madame de Vins, who are pleased that you think of them. I told the former how delighted you were that you had nothing to do with the foolish quarrels of Provence; he laughed, and I mentioned the reasons of your wisdom: he wished the Bretons would amuse themselves in quarrelling instead of revolting. I saw madame de Rouillé at her own house; I always thought her agreeable; I thought I was at Aix. I should like her daughter † extremely, but she has higher views. Madame de Vernueil, and madame la maréchale de Castelnau, have just been admiring your picture; they like it extremely, but it is not so handsome as you.

* This indifference in the brother of M. de Louvois cannot be considered as at all wonderful.

† No doubt, for M. de Sévigné.

LETTER CCCXXV.

TO THE SAME.

Versailles, Tuesday, Aug. 13, at midnight, 1675.

This is the news of the day. The king has just said that the duke of Zell having besieged Tréves, and the marshal de Crequi being on the march towards him, the duke had raised the siege, set fire to his own camp, passed the river on three bridges, charged the marshal in flank, routed him, and taken all his cannon and baggage, that the infantry are cut to pieces, and the cavalry in a deplorable condition; and that it was not known what had become of the marshal de Crequi. It is imagined, that the enemy has again returned before Tréves, which is now without a governor; for M. de Vignori, going to visit a battery, was thrown by his horse into the ditch, and killed on the spot*: poor La Marck and the chevalier de Cauvisson are killed. To-morrow we shall know the rest. All this came from the king's mouth; so that I think there is no room to doubt of its having been a complete defeat.

Wednesday, August 14.

I have been running about all the morning, to pick up some news about La Trousse and de Sanzei: not a word is said of the latter. Some say, that La Trousse is wounded; and others again, that it is not known where

* It was said, that M. de Vignori, the governor of Tréves, had received orders to make a sally from the town with the greater part of his garrison, and to join marshal de Crequi during the heat of the fight; but that not having had the precaution to communicate this to the officer next in command under him in the town, his sudden death entirely frustrated all the marshal's measures.

he is: but it appears pretty certain that he is not dead, because we know the names of so many of inferior rank that fell. The consternation is very great. There is nothing now to hinder this victorious army from joining Montecuculi, who has passed the Rhine at Strasbourg *; which has received the German troops, notwithstanding its neutrality. It is imagined, that the bad state of the prince's health will not permit him to be at the head of our army. What an unlucky circumstance for his reputation! Duras has at present the sole command: when he wrote to the king, to return him thanks for his promotion, he begged leave to observe to his majesty, that he was much less deserving of the honour of being marshal of France, than his brother M. de Lorges. The enemy are very proud of the death of M. de Turenne: see the effects of this event! Their courage is restored: I scarcely dare write it, but the consternation here is very general: this is the second time I have told you of it. Madame de Méri is in great pain about her brother: it would be very extraordinary if La Trousse should have escaped, in the situation he was in. We have no positive list of the killed yet: but the number is certainly great, by those we already hear of. The situation of poor madame de Crequi and madame de la Trousse is dreadful; for they neither of them know what is become of their husbands.

* This town was then governed in the nature of a republic, and did not become subject to the dominion of France till after the 30th of September, 1681.

LETTER CCCXXVI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, Aug. 16, 1675.

I COULD wish all you write to me of M. de Turenne inserted in a funeral oration. There is an uncommon beauty and energy in your style; it has all the force of eloquence that can be inspired by grief. Think not, my child, that the remembrance of him can be lost in this country: the torrent that sweeps every thing away, cannot remove a memory so well established: it is consecrated to immortality. I was the other day at M. de la Rochefoucault's, with madame de Lavardin, M. de Marsillac, and madame de la Fayette. The premier joined us. The conversation, which lasted two hours, turned wholly on the divine qualities of this true hero: the eyes of every one were bathed in tears; and you cannot imagine how deeply the grief of his loss is engraved on all their hearts. You have exceeded us in nothing, but in the satisfaction of sighing aloud, and of writing his panegyric. We remarked one thing, which was, that it is not at his death only, that the largeness of his heart, the extent of his knowledge, the elevation of his mind, are admired; all this the world acknowledged during his life. How much this admiration is increased by his death, you may easily suppose. In a word, my dear, do not think that the death of this great man is regarded here like that of others. You may talk of it as much as you please; but do not suppose your grief can exceed ours. That none of the devotees have yet taken it into their heads to doubt whether his soul were in a good state, proceeds from the perfect esteem every person felt for him; it is not possible to comprehend

that sin or guilt could find a place in his heart; his conversion *, so sincere, appeared to us like a baptism. Every one speaks of the innocence of his manners, the purity of his intentions, his unaffected humility, the solid glory that filled his heart, without haughtiness or ostentation, his love of virtue for its own sake, without regarding the approbation of men, and, to crown all, his generous and Christian charity. Did not I tell you of the regiment he clothed? It cost him fourteen thousand francs; and left him almost pennyless. The English told M. de Lorges, that they would continue to serve this campaign to avenge his death; but that they would afterwards retire, not being able to serve under any other general after M. de Turenne. When some of the new troops grew a little impatient in the morasses, where they were up to the knees in water, the old soldiers animated them thus: "What! do you complain? It is plain you do not yet know M. de Turenne: he is more grieved than we are, when we are in any difficulty; he thinks of nothing at this moment but of removing us hence; he wakes, while we sleep; he is a father to us; it is easy to see that you are but young soldiers." It was thus they encouraged them. All I tell you is true; I do not load you with idle stories to amuse you because you are at a distance; this would be cheating you, and you may rely upon what I write to you as firmly, as on what I should tell you, if you were here. I return to the state of his soul. It is really remarkable that no zealot has yet thought fit to doubt, whether it has pleased God to receive it with open arms, as one of the best and noblest he ever created: reflect a little upon this general assurance of his salvation, and you will find it is a sort of miracle scarcely known but in his case.

* He was originally a protestant.

The king has said of a certain person whose absence last winter delighted you, that he had neither head nor heart; these were his very words. M. de Rohan, with a handful of men, has dispersed and put to flight the mutineers, who were formed in troops in his duchy of Rohan. Our troops are at Nantes, commanded by Fourbin; for Vins is still a subaltern. Fourbin's orders are to obey M. de Chaulnes: but as M. de Chaulnes is at Fort-Lewis, Fourbin in effect has the command. You understand what these imaginary honours are, which remain without action in those who have the name of commanders. M. de Lavardin wished much to have this command: he has been at the head of an old regiment, and pretends it was an honour due to him; but his claim was not admitted. It is said, that our mutineers have sued for pardon: I suppose they will obtain it, after a sufficient number have been hanged. M. de Chamillart, who was odious to the province, is removed; and M. de Marsillac, who is a worthy man, is made intendant. These disorders no longer prevent me from taking my journey; but there is something here I am unwilling to leave: I have not yet been able to go to Livri, however my inclination may tempt me; time must be taken as it comes; we wish to be in the centre of news, in these critical times.

Let me add a word more concerning M. de Turenne. He had made an acquaintance with a shepherd, who knew the roads and the country well; he used to take him along with him, and order his troops to be posted according to his direction. He had a great affection for this shepherd, and esteemed him as a man of good plain sense. He said that colonel Bec owed his rise to a similar quality; and that he believed this shepherd would make his fortune as he had done. He was pleased with having contrived to make his troops pass without dan-

ger; and said to M. de Roye, "In good earnest this seems to me no ill performance, and I believe M. de Montecuculi will not find it so." It is indeed esteemed a masterpiece of military skill. Madame de Villars has seen another account since the day of battle, in which it is said that the chevalier de Grignan performed wonders, both in respect of valour and prudence: God preserve him! for the courage of M. de Turenne seems gone over to the enemy, and they think nothing impossible, since the defeat of marshal de Crequi.

M. de la Feuillade went post to Versailles the other day, where he surprised the king, and said to him, "Sire, some" (meaning Rochefort) "send for their wives, and some come to see them: I am come only to see your majesty, and to thank you a thousand and a thousand times. I shall see nobody besides your majesty, for it is to you I owe every thing." He talked a long while with the king, and then taking his leave, said, "Sire, I am going; I beg you to make my compliments to the queen and the dauphin, and to my wife and children." And he mounted his horse; and in reality, saw no other person. This little sally pleased the king much; he told the court, laughing, how he had been made the bearer of M. de Feuillade's compliments. It is a great thing to be happy; every thing then succeeds; nothing is taken amiss.

LETTER CCCXXVII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday evening, Aug. 16, 1675.

At length, my dear, M. de la Trousse is found. I admire his good fortune in this affair: after having per-

formed wonders at the head of his battalion, he was surrounded by two squadrons of the enemy's horse, so completely, that no one knew how it would end; when on a sudden he finds himself prisoner to —— Whom? The marquis de Grana, with whom he was intimate for six months at Cologne, and with whom he had cultivated a close friendship. You may judge how he will be treated: he has a pretty little wound, which will furnish him with an excellent plea for passing the vintage at La Trousse: for there is no reason to doubt that he will be released on his parole; and, what is still better, will meet with the most favourable reception at court. Nothing can exceed the congratulations and compliments that have been made him by all his friends on this occasion. I really pity him for having so many thanks to return: if he were to have carved his own fortune, could he have done it more completely to his wish? As for honest Sanzei, we have no news of him, which does not look well. Marshal de Crequi is at Tréves, at least it is so reported, and that his people saw him cross the river, with three others, in a miserable little boat. His wife is distracted with grief, not having heard a syllable from himself: for my part I really think he has been drowned, or else killed by the peasants in his way to Tréves. In short, matters appear to me to go badly on all sides, La Trousse excepted.

The prince is on his journey towards Germany. The duke is already there. M. de la Feuillade is gone to assemble the scattered remains of the marshal's army, in order to join the prince. We should not make almanacs: but if the enemy should have taken Haguenau, as it is reported, the map will inform us that is not so well. If you complain of want of news, you are really very difficult to please: it is my opinion that you will

not be in want of extraordinary events for some time. We are told here that the troops at Messina are quietly reimbarked, and returning to Provence.

The coadjutor had composed his speech in the customary style of a panegyric: but now it would be rather unseasonable; so he has passed over the present situation of affairs with admirable skill and address: he will inform you of the turn he has given to our late unhappy affair; and provided this be well ingrafted, it will make one of the finest and most elegant parts in his speech.

What says the count to all this news? It is he I congratulate on the glorious behaviour of the chevalier. St. Hérem lost two nephews in a week. The eldest had the command of the regiment of cavalry: I had some thoughts of asking it for your brother, but madame de Montrevel applied for it, with as much earnestness as she did for a husband, and how was it possible to refuse her? They say La Mark is not dead: I am sorry for his wife, and perhaps for his mistress.

LETTER CCCXXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, Aug. 19, 1675.

I BEGIN this letter, but shall not finish it till I have told you a great many things. I am thinking which I shall choose first.

I must relate some excellent things that have been said by the king, and which it will gratify you to hear. He was sensible of the loss he had sustained in M. de Turenne: he was for some time thoughtful, and could not but attribute our last misfortune * to the being de-

* See the Letter of the 13th August.

prived of that experienced general. One of the courtiers wishing to make him believe that our loss had been trifling, he replied, that he hated such dissimulation, for the defeat was the completest imaginable. He told those who seemed inclined to excuse marshal de Crequi, that he acknowledged him to be a brave man; "but what vexes me," added the king, "is, that my troops have been so shamefully beaten by persons who know nothing but how to play at basset: certainly the duke of Zell is but a young player; this, however, is a tolerable specimen of his skill." Another courtier asking, what business the marshal had to begin the attack; the king replied, by repeating a story which he remembered of the duke of Weimar*, and which was extremely applicable to the occasion. This duke of Weimar happening to be in France, an old man of the name of Parabere, and one of the knights of the cordon-bleu, said to him, speaking of an engagement that had terminated in a similar manner, "But why, sir, did you give battle?"—"Because, sir," said the duke, "I thought to have gained a victory:" and then turning upon his heel, he asked the standers-by, "Who is that blue-ribbon fool?" The application of this story must have been highly amusing. M. de Lorraine was very unwilling to obey the young duke of Zell, who is brother to the duke of Hanover; but the duke of Zell, who had all his troops there, wished to command them himself: and every thing succeeded to his wish. Nothing has been heard of marshal de Crequi since he was seen in the little boat: for my part, I believe him dead. The chevalier de Lorraine is no longer thought of: he is at his abbey: this is no time for trifling news. I have sent all your letters. I shall speak to M. de Pomponne

* One of the greatest generals of the seventeenth century.

about the *monseigneur*. In the mean time, I fancy M. de Vivonne has his passport without any farther consequences; and as it is certain that you ought not on any account to disoblige him, I would, in your place, write him a note, and slip in a *monseigneur* in honour of his family; as to the others, we will dispute it with them a little, such as Beuvron and Lavardin, who make their wives, aunts, and mothers, write to them in that style. I know this to be a fact, and that they are for delaying the decision *. It is imagined that d'Ambres will be worsted in his dispute with marshal d'Albret, and that the rule will be made general. The king, however, is to decide the business in a few days.

Monday night.

I have had an hour's conversation with M. de Pomponne and madame de Vins: and after having gone over several subjects, amongst which Provence had its share, I mentioned the *monseigneur*. "Ah, for God's sake, madame," said M. de Pomponne to me, "let M. de Grignan keep clear of Monsieur, or he will make his court badly. The king has explained himself in the affair of the marquis d'Ambres, who must knuckle. Marshal de Grammont says, in his way, that the count de Guiche was not a mean fellow, without birth or dignity, and that he never boggled at giving the title of *monseigneur* to any marshal of France; therefore, I beg that M. de Grignan will follow my advice in this matter." These were his very words; I write them as they came from his lips; so I would not have you hesitate with M. de Vivonne: you may avoid writing to the others; but if you do write to them, as marshal de Grammont

* There was a dispute at that time, whether a marshal of France had a right to be styled Monseigneur in writing to him.

says, you must not *boggle*. It is now four days since the king explained himself upon the subject, and the partisans of marshal de Grammont support it with all their might. Madame de Vins desired me to give you the fullest assurances of her esteem, and to tell you it is not every one on whom she bestows it. Mesdames de Villars and de St. Geran came in a little after we had done talking: the latter has spoken to the king, and requested that the government, which was the late Vaubrun's, might be conferred on her husband. She trembled so very much at first, that she could scarcely utter a word; but when she had recovered herself, no one could speak better; but, after all, I think she will not succeed.

Nothing could be more elegant or better-delivered than the coadjutor's speech: he touched upon the late disaster with a grace and delicacy that surprised every one; the courtiers were particularly struck; a variation of phrase is so novel, that he gladly embraced the opportunity Voiture wished for in his letters to the prince, and made as good a use of it as Voiture himself could have done. The king praised him highly; and said to the dauphin, "What would you give to speak as well as the coadjutor?"—"Sire," replied M. Montausier, "this is not our business: it is enough for us, if we know how to answer."

I have to thank the Grignans for all the honour they do me, and the compliments I have lately received from Germany and Versailles; I wish the elder Grignan had some favour at court, that I might have compliments also from Provence. M. de la Trousse has written to his wife: he is prisoner to his good friend the marquis de Grana, by whom he is treated with the utmost politeness. He is perfectly recovered from his wound, and is in good health: never, surely, was man so for-

tunate! it looks as if the whole action was brought about purely to heighten his glory. He writes word, that M. de Sanzei is certainly killed, and I think it must be so; for, besides that there is not the least account of him, he was the man most likely to sacrifice himself when he saw his regiment behave ill. However, we shall soon have certain intelligence.

I am not yet determined about my departure; it depends on a conference that is to be held at M. de l'Hommeau's, where we shall reason upon the state of affairs. The hero's body is not carried to Turenne, as I was told, but to St. Denis, where it is to be laid at the foot of the tomb of the Bourbons. A chapel is intended to be erected for the bodies, which are to be taken out of the hole in which they now are, and M. de Turenne will be the first that will be placed in it. There are already four great captains at their master's feet; but were there not, methinks he has a right to be first. In all the places through which this illustrious corpse passes, nothing is to be heard but cries and lamentations, people crowding to touch the bier, and processions to meet or follow it without number; so that those who have the charge of it are obliged to proceed by night. If it comes through Paris, it will occasion universal grief.

I have just been told from good authority, that the courtiers, thinking to make their court to perfection, told the king, that whole squadrons, and even battalions, at a time, were every moment coming into Thionville and Metz, and that our loss had in fact been little or nothing. His majesty, like a man of honour, was disgusted with such barefaced flattery, and said to them, "Why, here are more troops than I had at first." Marshal de Grammont, who has a readier turn of wit than any of the rest, answered, "May it please your

majesty, they have had little ones." These are trifles that I take pleasure in hearing and repeating, when they are true.

A courier is arrived who saw marshal de Crequi at Tréves. We are still very uneasy about Sanzei; we hear nothing of him but what is disagreeable: some say he is a prisoner, others that he has been killed, and others again, that he is in Tréves with the marshal. But there is no dependence on this. The enemies keep Tréves blocked up. The king told M. le Premier, that he was glad to find his son was safe; M. le Premier replied, "I had rather, sire, he had been taken prisoner, or wounded: I am not pleased with this safety." The king assured him he had done his duty. They begin to talk again of the journey to Fontainbleau. I have not yet forgiven that charming place, for separating us*; I cannot think of that moment without emotion and grief: I must absolutely go there again to meet you, or I shall never be reconciled to it.

The grand-duchess of Tuscany is wholly absorbed in grief at her prison of Montmartre. She has made known to all the ladies, that after their first visit, she wishes to receive no more, and gave the information first to madame de Raré. This is thought unnecessarily severe; it is true, she very much resembles the Diana of Arles; but I think she can never hope to be cheerful again, after the life she leads.

Cardinal de Bouillon is just arrived here, he is greatly affected with your letters, and convinced of the sincerity of your sentiments; he is almost always weeping. I intend to show him a letter from the chevalier de Grignan, which it is impossible to read without tears. I have had very little company to-day; I find myself

* See the letter dated the 10th of August.

very well after my medicine; I was nursed by all my friends: your picture served to enliven the conversation; it appears every day more excellent. It is perhaps because Mignard has left off painting. Adieu, my dear and ever lovely child; if you should find a thousand faults in this letter, excuse them, for I cannot think of reading it over again.

LETTER * CCCXXIX.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

August, 1675.

[She begins by informing him of the letter of the count de Grammont, which has already appeared in that of the 31st July, and then adds]:—My father was the inventor of this style; he wrote thus to marshal de Schomberg (superintendant of the finances), when he was made marshal of France:

"Monseigneur,

"Quality; black-beard; familiarity.

"Chantal."

You will understand, that he meant to say he had been made marshal of France on account of his quality; of his having a black beard, like Lewis XIII. his master; and of his familiarity with him.

Upon the complaint marshal d'Albret has made to the king, that the marquis d'Ambres, in writing to him, did not address him by the title of Monseigneur, his majesty ordered the marquis to do it; upon which, he wrote the following letter to the marshal:

"Monseigneur,

"Your master and mine has ordered me to use the

word Monseigneur to you; I obey the order I have just received with the same readiness with which I shall always obey those that come from the same quarter, persuaded that you know in what degree I am, monseigneur,

"your very obedient, and very humble servant."

This is marshal d'Albret's answer:

"Sir,

"The king, your master and mine, being the most intelligent prince in the world, ordered you to give me the title of Monseigneur, because it is my due; and I, because I would express myself clearly and unequivocally, assure you, that in future I shall be, according as your conduct merits, sir, your very obedient, &c."

LETTER CCCXXX.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNTESS DE GRIGNAN.

Livri, Wednesday, Aug. 21, 1675.

INDEED, my dear child, you ought to be with me. I came here this morning alone, extremely fatigued, and so tired of Paris, that I could no longer remain there. Our abbé stays behind on account of some affairs: I have nothing to do till Saturday; I shall be here these three days in peace and quiet: I shall walk much; I believe my health requires it. I shall think often of you, not to say continually. There is no wood, no lawn, which does not bring to my remembrance that we were there together last year. Alas! how sad a difference! It is sweet to me to think of you, but your absence mingles a bitterness with my thoughts, at which my heart sickens. I foresee this will be a gloomy evening with me. I am most pleased with entertaining you in the little cabinet you so much frequented; there nothing interrupts me.

I left M. de Coulanges * in much pain for M. de Sanzei. As for M. de la Trousse, since the days of my darling Romans, I have never met with such a fortunate adventure. Have you never heard of a prince in battle, fighting to the last extremity, and of another advancing to see who it is that makes such gallant resistance? He sees the inequality of the combat; he is ashamed of it; he calls off his men; he asks pardon of the valiant hero, who is induced, by his generous behaviour, to deliver up his sword to him, which, had it not been for this proceeding, he would never have yielded; he makes him his prisoner. He then discovers him to have been one of his friends, when they both lived together in the court of Augustus: he treats him as his brother, and praises his extraordinary valour. But the prisoner is observed to sigh; perhaps he is in love. I suppose he will be permitted to return upon his parole: but I do not see where the princess is, who expects him; this circumstance only is wanting to complete the history.

Whenever I send you news, depend on it, that I have it from persons of good authority, but they will not be cited for trifles. There are some very knowing ones to whose intelligence I never attend. Do you wish to know what the valets have written on this occasion †? You may guess that this comes from a place where they collect ridiculous letters. One makes an inventory of what he has lost, as his trunk, his coat, his hat, or perhaps his bottle. "It was," says he, "a devilish confusion: if I had been general, it would never have happened." Another says, "We were a company of pleasant madmen; we were but seven thousand, and we

* M. de Coulanges was the brother-in-law of M. de Sanzei, and first-cousin of M. de la Trousse.

† That is, after the unfortunate affair of marshal de Crequi at Trèves.

attacked twenty-six thousand; so you may see how finely we have been drubbed." A third says, "We took to our heels as fast as we could, and were in a terrible fright." You must think, my dear, I have a great deal of leisure to write all these fooleries.

You speak so handsomely of cardinal de Retz, and of his retreat, that this alone would render you worthy of his friendship, and esteem. Some people say, he ought to come to Saint Denis; but they would be the first to blame him, if he should take their advice. Many are desirous, at any rate, to tarnish the beauty of his action; but I defy the most subtle jealousy to effect this.

What you say of M. de Turenne deserves a place in his panegyric. Cardinal de Bouillon will have the pleasure, or rather the pain, of it; for I am well assured it will make him weep. Since the death of this hero, the hero of the breviary is retired to Commerci; there was no longer any safety for him at Saint Michael. The first president of the court of aids has an estate in Champagne; his tenant came to him the other day, to demand either to have his rent considerably abated, or to be released from his bargain. He was asked why he wished it, and told that it was not customary. He replied, that, in the time of M. de Turenne, the people might gather in their harvests in safety, and count upon the revenue of their lands in that country; but that, since his death, all the world was quitting it, fearing the enemy would soon enter it. These things, which are simple and natural, are a more splendid encomium on that great man than the most studied harangues of a Fleschier and a Mascaron.

Do not press me so earnestly to come and see you; you distract my thoughts too much from my melancholy duties. If I listened to the suggestions of my heart, I should lay aside all my little affairs, and come away

to Grignan. Oh! with what joy should I fix myself there; and follow for the few remaining days of my life the dictates of my fancy and my inclination! What folly it is to incommode ourselves for the formalities of duties and business! Alas! who is there that will thank us for it? But while I am too much of this way of thinking, my actions, to my great regret, are the reverse of this: as for my words, they have already taken wing; and I have withdrawn myself at least from the constraint of approving what I still continue to do.

The friends * of the lady-traveller (madame de Maintenon), perceiving that the curtain begins to be undrawn, affect to laugh, and turn it into ridicule; or else they own that there has been something, but that all is reconciled. I will neither answer for the present, nor the future, in such an uncertain country; but I can assure you of the past. As for the sovereignty, it is as firmly re-established as it has ever been since the days of Pharamond. Quantova (madame de Montespan) plays at cards in her night-gown with the lady of the castle (the queen), who thinks herself too happy in being received, and understands she is to retire upon the least intimation given to the lady of the bed-chamber.

Fear nothing from our war of Britany; there is no farther danger: you may safely trust to my cowardice; I believe I shall venture thither under the protection of the great d'Harouis. My health is perfectly restored: my good friend de Lorme has told me, that I may keep his powder for the winter, and take a ptisane for three days, which he thinks a remedy proper for this season. He is of opinion that I have entirely got over this indisposition.

* These friends are madame de la Fayette, madame d'Heudicourt, and madame de Coulanges.

My son is in despair about the affair of his guidon-age *: do you remember the prudent maxims you laid down for him, by the authority of don Quixote? He is at present nine hundred leagues from the post he might have arrived at by following your directions. Every vacancy is demanded for brothers who have been wounded, or families that have suffered so much in the service, that I am ashamed to use any means to bar up their way to preferment. We must leave it to Providence to determine the fortune of this poor guidon: I encourage him as much as I can.

I will let you know my address, if I go from hence: alas! you may safely leave this care to me; it is the chief support of my life. Adieu for to-day: I have tired you sufficiently. The bell rings to prayers: you are not unacquainted with my regularity. It is very fine weather: I shall walk a great deal, and think of you with extreme affection.

LETTER CCCXXXI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, Aug. 26, 1675.

I RETURNED on Saturday from Livri, and went after dinner to madame de Lavardin's, who has written you a few lines, with an account of what passed. The court set out this morning for Fontainbleau; the remembrance of that place makes me shudder †; yet other people go there for amusement. God grant we do not meet with some fatal blow in the mean time. The siege of Tréves is carried on briskly. If any ball has a commission to

* The office of a standard-bearer.

† See Letter of the 19th August.

kill marshal de Crequi, it will have no great difficulty in finding him, for he exposes himself like a madman. The prince is with the army in Germany. He said to a person who was with him not long since: "I wish I could converse with the shade of M. de Turenne for two hours only, that I might be let into his chain of operations and designs, and make myself as well acquainted with the country, and Montecuculi's manner of acting, as he was." And when the same person told him that he thought his highness looked very well, and prayed God that he might return safe, for his own sake as well as that of France, the prince made him no answer, but shrugged up his shoulders.

My son writes me word that the prince of Orange is making preparation to besiege Quesnoi; if so, they are on the eve of an action. M. de Luxembourg wants to do something to be talked of; he is very happy, for he has conversed with the prince's shade. In short, we are under apprehensions on all sides. I have asked M. de Louvois for Sanzei's regiment, with leave to dispose of the guidonage, supposing all the while that poor Sanzei is really dead; though we have no news of him yet. The viscount de Marsilly is my resident with the minister, and is to bring me his answer. As for the regiment of Picardy, we must think no more of it; unless we wish to be overwhelmed with debt in two years: *overwhelmed* is wrong, the true word is *dishonoured;* for, since we are no longer permitted to ruin ourselves, nor to borrow, as formerly, there is nothing left for us but downright infamy. Chenoise, the nephew of Saint-Hérem, is risen from the dead within these two days; he was taken prisoner by the Germans, and it is among them we ought to look for M. de Sanzei. Poor little Froulai was obliged to move, and turn, and examine, five hundred dead bodies in a part of the

field of battle, to find this poor fellow, who was at length discovered wounded in ten or twelve places: his poor mother begged the place of grand-maréchale-des-logis (of the palace), which she purchased: she laments and weeps; she is told they will think about it, and more than twenty persons are striving for the place. In truth, every day convinces us that nothing could be more complete, nor attended with greater confusion, than the defeat of marshal de Crequi. I saw his lady on Saturday at M. de Pomponne's: it is scarcely possible to know her.

Do not imagine, my dear child, that the death of M. de Turenne has been only a nine days' wonder: he is talked of and lamented daily: happy, as you say, are those who have not felt his loss. The defeat which has taken place since his death, has called forth anew the praises of this hero. You gave me great pleasure in saying you shuddered at the speech of St. Hilaire: he is not dead; he will live with his left arm, and preserve the beauty and magnanimity of his soul. I suppose you were very much surprised to hear of a defeat on our part, no such thing having happened since your birth. The coadjutor is the only one who has profited by the circumstance, in giving so novel and spirited an air to his harangue, that this part of it has constituted all its value, at least to the courtiers, for all the clever ones praised it from beginning to end. I dined on Saturday with the coadjutor, and the handsome abbé: I am delighted when I see any of the Grignans.

Search through the court, my dear child, and through all France, and you will find I am the only one who, having a daughter I so truly love, am deprived of the pleasure of seeing and passing my life with her: these are dispensations of Providence, to which I cannot submit without infinite pain; we do well then to write to

one another, since it is all the gratification we have. I can easily conceive how much your time is employed in reading my letters, and how much they take you from your other duties: you lose your senses, you say, and I am told the same thing two or three times in a week. My abominably long letters are enough to do it. They make a volume, and it must be utterly impossible for you to read them through at once, and yet you say you like them. Here is the fat abbé, who tells me a thousand ridiculous things of my journey into Britany. He will have it that I have fixed to go only since I heard of the disorders occasioned by the mutineers there, and that I want sadly to be present, because I may not have an opportunity of seeing such a sight again as long as I live.

The chevalier de Lorraine is returned to Monsieur again, as if nothing had happened: he has met with some charitable person, who has put him into the right or wrong way at last. This has excited but little attention: it is the evil of a day, in comparison with the death of M. de Turenne and the consequences that have followed it.

Our cardinal is still at St. Michael's. I am going to write to him; he will not be displeased with me for doing so. The abbé de Pontcarré is very deserving of your letters; he likes them, and knows how to read them: he shows them to me, and then hides them as he would old gold. You cannot conceive what an agreeable turn you give, without thinking of it, to every thing you undertake.

Mademoiselle is here for the purpose of bathing; she does not go to Fontainbleau. I most sincerely embrace M. de Grignan and my grand-children; but I am yours, my dear, above every other consideration: you know how far I am from the dotage which transfers

the maternal love to the grand-children: mine remains fixed in the first stage, and I love the little ones only because I love you.

LETTER CCCXXXII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, Aug. 28, 1675.

If I had the means of sending letters to you every day, I could easily contrive to write them. I sometimes do so even now, though my letters do not go; but the pleasure of writing is reserved for you alone; to every one else I write, because I must. I have farther particulars to relate to you respecting M. de Turenne. Madame d'Elbeuf*, who is for a few days at the cardinal de Bouillon's, invited me to dine with them yesterday, and to share in their grief. Madame de la Fayette was likewise there; the purpose of our meeting was fully answered, for there was not a dry eye among us. Madame d'Elbeuf had a picture of the hero, admirably executed. All his people arrived at eleven o'clock; the poor creatures were already in deep mourning, and bathed in tears: three gentlemen came in who were ready to die at sight of the picture; their cries pierced every heart; they could not utter a word; his footmen, his pages, his trumpeters, were all in tears, and made every body else weep to see them. The first who was able to speak, answered our mournful questions, and we prevailed on him to relate the manner of his death. It seems he was desirous of confessing, and when he retired for that purpose, he gave his orders for the evening, and was to have communicated the next day, which was Sunday, when he expected to give battle. He

* Sister to cardinal de Bouillon.

mounted on horseback at two o'clock the Saturday, after having taken a little refreshment, and as he had many people with him, he left them all at about thirty paces from the hill, and said to young d'Elbeuf, "Nephew, stay you there: you move round me so much, that I shall be known." M. Hamilton, who happened to be near the place where he was going, said to him, "Sir, come this way if you please, the enemy's fire is directed to the place in which you are." "You are right, sir," replied M. de Turenne; "I would not willingly be killed to-day; this will do extremely well." He had scarcely turned his horse, when he saw St. Hilaire, who, coming up to him with his hat in his hand, desired him to cast his eye on a battery he had just raised, pointing to the place. M. de Turenne turned back, and at that very instant, without having time to stop his horse, he had his arm and part of his body torn to pieces by the same ball that carried off St. Hilaire's arm and hand in which he held his hat. The gentleman, who was watching him attentively, did not see him fall, for his horse ran away with him as far as the spot where he had left young d'Elbeuf; he was leaning with his face over the pummel of the saddle. The moment his horse stopped, this great man fell off into the arms of his people, who were gathered round him, twice opened wide his eyes, moved his lips a little, and sank to eternal rest. Think of his death, and of part of his heart being carried away! His people immediately burst into loud cries and lamentations, but M. Hamilton quieted them as well as he could, and had young d'Elbeuf removed, who had thrown himself upon his uncle's body frantic with grief, and would not be dragged from it without violence. A cloak was immediately thrown over the body, and it was placed by the side of a hedge, where they kept watch over it in silence till a carriage could

be sent for, to carry it to his tent: there it was met by M. de Lorges, M. de Roye, and several others, who were ready to expire with grief; but they were obliged to restrain themselves, and think of the important business that had devolved on them. A military service was performed in the camp, where tears and sorrow were the mourning: the officers, however, had each a crape scarf, the drums were covered with the same, they beat only a single stroke, the soldiers marched with their pikes trailing and pieces reversed; but the cries and lamentations of a whole army cannot be described without emotion. His two nephews assisted at this mournful ceremony, I leave you to judge in what condition. M. de Roye, though much wounded, would be carried thither. I suppose the poor chevalier de Grignan was overwhelmed with grief. When the body was removed from the camp, to be brought to Paris, the same scene of grief was renewed, and in every place through which it passed, nothing was heard but lamentations: at Langres, however, they exceeded even this; the bier was met by more than two hundred of the principal inhabitants in mourning, followed by the common people, and all the clergy in sacerdotal habits. In the town a solemn service was performed, and they all voluntarily entered into a contribution towards defraying the expenses, which amounted to five thousand francs; for they conducted the body as far as the next town. What say you to these natural marks of affection, founded on the most extraordinary merit? He is to be brought to St. Denis this evening; the people are all gone to meet the body at a place about two leagues distant, from whence they will conduct it to a chapel, where it is to be deposited for the present; there will be a service performed at St. Denis, till that at Notre Dame is celebrated, which will be a solemn one. Such

our entertainment at the cardinal's; we dined, as you may suppose, melancholy enough, and afterwards did nothing but sigh till four o'clock. Cardinal de Bouillon mentioned you, and took upon him to answer for you, that, had you been in Paris, you would have made one in our sad party: I assured him that you took no small share in his grief. He intends to answer both your letter and M. de Grignan's; he desired me to say a thousand kind things to you, and so did the worthy d'Elbeuf, who, as well as her son, has lost every thing. It was a good idea to undertake thus to tell you what you know already as well as myself; but these originals struck me, and I was glad to show you in what way we forget M. de Turenne in this part of the world.

M. de la Garde told me the other day, that in the enthusiasm of the wonders which were related of the chevalier de Grignan, he had advised his brothers * to bestir themselves on the occasion, to support his interest at least for the present year; and that he found them both very well disposed to do extraordinary things. This good La Garde is at Fontainbleau, from whence he is to return in three days, to set out at last; for he longs to be gone, though courtiers in general seem to be very leaden-heeled. The situation of poor madame de Sanzei is really deplorable; we know nothing yet respecting her husband; he is neither dead nor alive, wounded nor prisoner. His people do not take the least notice of him in their letters. M. de la Trousse, after having mentioned the report of his being killed (this was the day of the action), has never since mentioned a syllable about him, either to madame de Sanzei or to Coulanges †, so that we are quite at a loss what to say

* The coadjutor of Arles, and the abbé de Grignan.

† Madame de Sévigné was sister to M. de Coulanges, and M. de la Trousse was first-cousin to both.

to this distracted woman; and yet it is cruel to let her remain in this state of uncertainty: for my part, I am persuaded her husband is killed; the dust and blood must probably disfigure him so much, as not to be known again, and he has been stripped with the rest of the slain. Or he was perhaps killed at a distance from any of the rest; or by the country-people on the road, and thrown into a hedge. I think it is more probable that he has met with some such melancholy fate, than that he has been taken prisoner without a word having been heard respecting him.

And now, my dear, I must tell you that the abbé thinks my journey so necessary, that I no longer oppose it; I shall not have him always with me, and therefore I ought to take advantage of his good intentions towards me. It will be only a trip of two months, for the good abbé is not the least disposed to pass the winter there. He expresses himself very sincerely on the subject, and you know I am always the dupe of every thing that has the appearance of sincerity: so much the worse for those who deceive me. I conceive that it would be very dull there in the winter; long evenings may be compared to long marches for tediousness. I was not dull the winter you were with me: you, who are young, might have felt so, but do you remember our readings? It is true, that if every thing had been taken away that surrounded the table, and even the book too, it is impossible to tell what would have become of me. Providence will arrange every thing. I treasure up all your sayings: we get out of our dullness as we do out of bad roads: we see no one stop short in the middle of a month, because he has not the courage to go through it; it is like dying, we see no one who does not know how to keep out of this dilemma: there are parts in your letters which I neither can nor will

forget. Are my friend Corbinelli and M. de Vardes with you? I hope they are. In that case, I dare say, there has been no deficiency of conversation among you; you have talked incessantly of the state of affairs, of the death of M. de Turenne, and are at a loss to guess what will be the consequences of it: in fact, you are just like ourselves, though you are in Provence. M. de Barillon supped here last night. The conversation turned upon M. de Turenne, and the universal grief occasioned by his loss: he entered largely into his virtues, his love of truth, his love of virtue for its own sake, and his reward in the practice of it: he finished this eulogium with adding, that no one could love and esteem M. de Turenne without being the better for it. His company and conversation inspired such hatred of deceit and double-dealing, as raised his friends above the generality of mankind. In this number the chevalier was particularly distinguished as one for whom this great man showed more than common esteem and affection, and who, on his side, was one of his greatest admirers. We shall never see his equal in any age; I do not think we are quite blind in the present day, at least those I meet are not so, and this perhaps is boasting that I keep good company. But I must tell you one word more of M. de Turenne, which I heard yesterday. You know Pertuis well, and his adoration and attachment to M. de Turenne; as soon as he heard of his death, he wrote his majesty the following note: "Sire, I have lost M. de Turenne; I feel my heart unable to support this blow: and being incapable of serving your majesty as I ought to do, I humbly request your permission to resign my government of Courtrai." Cardinal de Bouillon prevented the letter from being given to the king; but, fearing he might come in person, he informed his majesty of the effect Pertuis' grief had on him. The king

appeared to enter with great goodness and indulgence into his sentiments, and told cardinal de Bouillon that he esteemed Pertuis the more for this mark of attachment to his friend and benefactor*, and that he thought him too honest a man not to discharge his duty in whatever situation he was in. This is a specimen of grief for this hero. He had a patrimony of 40,000 livres a year; and M. Boucherat says, that after all his debts, and the several legacies he has bequeathed, are paid, there will not remain more than 10,000. These are the vast treasures he had amassed during a service of fifty years! Adieu, my dearest child, I embrace you a thousand times, and with inexpressible tenderness.

LETTER CCCXXXIII.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, Aug. 30, 1675.

I HAVE determined to leave this place on the fourth of next month; I shall go directly to Orléans, where I shall find M. d'Harouis, and where we shall embark on Sunday, after mass. I shall write to you on Wednesday, on setting out; I shall remain some time at Nantes, and shall then proceed to the Rocks. My return is fixed, certainly, for November, if I live. I very much regret the interruption of our correspondence, which will be a little irregular: but life is full of events that wound the heart.

I am just returned from the service performed for M. de Turenne at St. Denis. Madame d'Elbeuf came to fetch me, and cardinal de Bouillon invited me so pressingly that I could not refuse. The ceremony was ex-

* He had been captain of the guard to M. de Turenne.

tremely mournful: the corpse was placed in the middle of the church. It arrived there the night before, with such show of sorrow, that M. Boucherat, who received it, and who watched with it all night, was almost dead himself with weeping. Not only the afflicted family and the domestics were in mourning and in tears; nothing but sighs and sobs were to be heard around. Of his friends were present messieurs Boucherat, de Harlai, de Barillon, and de Meaux. Madame d'Elbeuf was almost in hysterics from grief: it is impossible to doubt this poor woman's sorrow. It was a melancholy spectacle to see all his guards standing, every one with his partisan on his shoulder, round the corpse they had so ill defended, and at the conclusion of mass to see them carry the bier, and place it in the chapel over the great altar, where it is deposited. The ceremony of this removal was very affecting; every one was in tears, and many were not able to restrain their cries. At last we got into the chapel, which madame d'Elbeuf filled with the most piercing lamentations. When this was over, we returned to a very melancholy repast at cardinal de Bouillon's, who would have us come there; he has begged me in pity to return this evening at six o'clock, to take him and madame d'Elbeuf to Vincennes: they have talked very much of you. The cardinal says he will write to you to-day; but I shall close my packet before I go there, that I may not be uneasy about returning early: the moon will light us wherever the cardinal pleases. I shall perhaps go to-morrow to Livri to enjoy a walk by moonlight, and to take leave of my charming abbey. The abbé has been there these three days: he talks of nothing now but retirement; it is the fashion.

What say you to the prince, who has raised the siege of Haguenau in the same manner as he put the

enemy to flight last year at Oudenard? This is a fact. I have heard no news from Fontainbleau except that four tragedies of Corneille's, four of Racine's, and two comedies of Moliere's, are to be played there. I cannot forgive Cavoye for having gone to Fontainbleau this morning in preference to St. Denis. Adieu, my dear child; embrace me I conjure you, and tell me no more that you do not deserve my tenderest affection. Why should you not deserve it, if it be true that you love me? On what other account can you be unworthy of it? Embrace me once more, my dear; and be contented to let me love you more than myself, since you own you love me a little.

Poor Sanzei's people are returned, and though his body has not been found, they believe he has been killed. They are preparing his wife to hear the sad intelligence, without yet daring to make her put on mourning. The countess de Fiesque was thus situated for three months with her first husband, the marquis of Piennes, who may yet return.

LETTER CCCXXXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Wednesday, Sept. 4, 1675.

Madame de Puisieux has written me word, that, hearing it was my intention to set out yesterday, she advised me to defer my journey till Monday. I acquiesced, without any farther reasoning, and so, my dear, here am I till then. The count returns on Friday. The siege of Haguenau is raised*: matters are far from turning

* M. de Mathieu, who commanded in Haguenau, was lieutenant-colonel of the marine regiment, and a very distinguished officer. He had said several times before the place was besieged, "As long as Mathieu

out so bad as you foresaw; though Montecuculi has only abandoned his designs to embarrass the prince, who, finding himself rather overmatched, has retired towards Schlestat. M. de Lorraine * in writing to his daughter † on the subject of the last defeat (at Consarbruck) never mentions marshal de Crequi in other terms than the *honest marshal, honest Crequi*. There is a certain malignant air in that letter very much resembling the turn of mind of *his highness my father*. It is to be wished that the attendants of the dead, or reputed dead, did not return again, for M. de Sanzei's people give a shocking account of that affair. We had two thousand men foraging, and were but five thousand to twenty-two thousand. The river was suppposed impassable, whereas it was fordable in three different places, by which the enemy's army crossed over, and attacked ours in flank. La Trousse gave his opinion upon the matter, but he was not heard. The marshal fought like a man beside himself, and when he saw all was lost threw himself into Tréves, which he defends like another Oroondates. He saved a great number of the troops; the rout and confusion were greater than the slaughter. M. de Sanzei's body cannot be found; his people saw him rush into the middle of one of the enemy's squadrons, known by the name of *sans quartier* ‡, crying out that he desired no quarter; he fought a considerable time; the remains of his regiment rallied, but not a word was heard of him: can it be supposed but

exists, Haguenau shall be the king's." He became colonel of marines on the 29th August 1675, that is, a few days after the raising of the siege.

* Charles IV. duke of Lorraine.

† Anne de Lorraine, countess de L'Isle-bonne.

‡ i. e. who neither received nor gave quarter, like the hussar ment of death among the Prussians.

that he was left dead upon the field of battle, where there was no opportunity of looking for him immediately, nor probability of knowing him afterwards? Poor madame de Sanzei came here on Saturday about seven in the morning, just as I was in my carriage to go to Livri. I immediately alighted and did not leave her for the whole day. She expected to have met her husband's people with his equipage, which came in about an hour afterwards; it was enough to make one weep to see such a train of poor, meagre, woe-begone wretches. She is to set out in a few days for Autrui: she is greatly afflicted, and her tears are those of real sorrow. She was advised not to go into mourning yet. I could not help smiling at such a ridiculous idea. M. de Sanzei will return with Enoch and Elias, St. John the Baptist, the late marquis de Fiennes, and the marquis d'Estrées. What folly to doubt of his death; and, at last, to pull off the crape-band *, and be with child again! The only way to be always ready to receive a lost husband, is never to marry again.

Lannoi, that is, madame de Montrevel, is in a great rage; after hanging for a month to the ears of the king and *Quanto*, begging for the royal regiment with enthusiasm, as she does every thing, it has been given to the marquis de Montrevel †, her husband's uncle, who has already deprived them of the lieutenancy-general (of Bresse). It is not known what measures he has taken, nor what manœuvre he adopted; but at the time he appeared the least active, this desirable regiment was given him; it is true, he is brave to rashness; it is he who was in love with madame de Coulanges, who is handsome, and well made; I forgot that he is at law

* It was at that time the custom for widows to wear a band of crape over the forehead.

† Since marshal of France.

with his nephew, and that he is his mortal enemy, for it is a very divided family.

The chevalier de Coislein * is returned home in consequence of the death of M. de Turenne, declaring that he could no longer serve after having lost that great man; that his health was greatly impaired, and that it was only with a view of following that hero, that he had undertaken the last campaign; but now that he was gone, he should retire to Bourbon. The king, being informed of this, has already disposed of his regiment, and declares, that if it were not in consideration of his brothers, he would send him to the Bastille. I think you have now had enough of the marvellous; methinks you grow weary of it, and so I shall furnish you with no more. It was your own desire to hear some extraordinary adventures, your wish was granted; and now, on a sudden you cry out, Hold; in mercy have done.

Faucher, of the hotel d'Estrées, came to see me yesterday; he is returning to Rome by way of Savoy. We had a great deal of chat together; and he related to me the whole quarrel between the pope and the ambassador; he convinced me that Marseilles was still at a considerable distance from a cardinal's hat: in short, after having had a great deal of talk about Portugal and Savoy, and a thousand other things, he desired to see your picture. He is a connoisseur in painting. I wish M. de Grignan and you could have witnessed the unaffected admiration with which he was struck, the praises he bestowed on the likeness, and particularly on the excellence of the painting on the head which starts from

* Charles Cæsar de Cambout de Coislein, knight of Malta, after quitting the king's service, retired from the court and the world, and gave himself up to the strictest devotion. See Necrolog. de Port-Royal, p. 80. Amsterdam edit. 1723.

the canvass; the neck which seems to breathe, and the figure that advances: in short, he stood gazing like a fool for half an hour. I told him I would show him St. Geran's picture, which I thought better painted; he has seen it, and I expected he would have beaten me; he called me *ignorant*, and what was worse, *woman*. He says the features are masterly, and what I considered as the worst parts of the picture became the greatest beauties in his description. Here was colouring! there was brilliancy! Here the flesh seemed to yield to the touch! there the head and neck projected from the canvass, as if offering to meet you! you would have died with laughing at his manner of admiring every thing. He has made so great a fuss about it, that M. de Lorges came yesterday, more for the sake of seeing your picture, than visiting me. He was charmed with it. I want to carry it about with me. How very truly did I speak the other day when I assured you that if any person was in love with me, he might esteem himself happy to be as much beloved by me in return as this dear resemblance is!

I fear the prince is ill; I think I heard some such report. We are so far from having obliged Montecuculi to repass the Rhine, that he has drawn us towards Schlestad, and obliged us to abandon Lower Alsatia. Marshal de Crequi goes on like a demon at Tréves. His lady is so certain that Sanzei is there with him, that madame de Sévigné dares not put on mourning, till the end of the siege has determined it. M. de St. Thou, going with thirty horse to reconnoitre the enemy's motions, fell in with upwards of two hundred cavalry; he believed they were ours, and advanced too far: he was immediately deserted by his men; the enemy offered him quarter, but he answered, he would have none; upon which he was instantly cut in pieces. This was a very silly exit;

but it has made his sister and her ugly husband the richest couple in France. I can easily guess how you have been overwhelmed with compliments on account of your two brothers-in-law *: the echoes that repeat for a month afterwards, like those at Oulioulles, are very troublesome. I am of your opinion that you would have had much less to do with a coward and a fool. Madame de Coëtquen † is not worthy of feeling grief so long as she does. About two years ago, she took a little picture of M. de Turenne from madame d'Elbeuf, who used to wear it upon her arm. Madame d'Elbeuf asked her for it several times; she always told her, she had lost it, but we guess it is not lost to every one. Ah, illustrious hero, is it thus then thou art to be sacrificed! But it is not the first instance of a great man's being injured, when he is no longer in the zenith of his power.

Madame de Vaubrun is at present with our sisters of St. Mary; she is almost idiotic, and makes a jest of every thing that father St. Martha ‡, her confessor, says to her: she has had her husband's § body brought into the church, and the service performed for it was more magnificent than that for M. de Turenne at St. Denis. She has his heart preserved in a small case, and takes it out and handles it, and weeps over it, every day; there are two candles constantly burning before it. She passes all her time from dinner to supper without stirring; and when they tell her that she has been there for

* The chevalier de Grignan, and the coadjutor of Arles, who had lately signalized themselves, one by his behaviour in the field, and the other by the harangue he had had the honour of addressing to the king.

† Madame de Coëtquen had very ill kept a secret of importance, that M. de Turenne had been weak enough to intrust her with. She was suspected of having given the picture to the chevalier de Lorraine.

‡ General of the Oratory.

§ Who was killed the first of August, at the battle of Altenheim.

seven hours, she is hardly to be persuaded that it is above half an hour. In short, she is under no sort of government, and it is apprehended that she will lose her senses. Madame de Langeron is still inconsolable: if these afflictions continue, you will have reason to be satisfied*. It was affirmed yesterday that the emperor had caused a service to be said for M. de Turenne.

LETTER CCCXXXV.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Friday, Sept. 6, 1675.

I AM setting out, my dear child, extremely melancholy at the thought of removing to a greater distance from you, and of having our correspondence interrupted for some days. I leave a part of my domestics sick; but I shall have an opportunity of experiencing what it is, not to be served according to my fancy, and to live a little without attendants. I shall be pleased with ascertaining the docility of my temper; and shall follow the examples of courage and reason which you give me. Does not madame de Coulanges effect wonders, to spend her time in so melancholy a way at Lyons without repining? It would be a fine thing, indeed, if I were only able to live with people I am pleased with! I shall remember your lectures; I shall amuse myself with paying my debts, and eating my food; I shall think much of you; I shall read, walk, write, and receive your letters. Alas! life passes away but too swiftly; part of it is consumed every where.

I carry with me an infinite number of remedies, good or bad; they are all well recommended, and prescribed

* It appears that madame de Grignan had no opinion of grief which was not violent and lasting.

to me by my neighbours and friends. I hope, however, this magazine of medicines will be of little use to me, for I am extremely well in health. I went to Livri alone, the day before yesterday, and had a delightful walk with the moon: there was no dew; I was there from six in the evening till midnight, and find myself not the worse for this little indiscretion. It was a duty I owed to my charming abbey, and the lovely Diana, to bid them adieu. I might have gone to Chantilli with a very pleasant party, but I did not think myself at liberty to take the excursion, and have deferred it to the spring. I have just been to Mignard's, to see Louvigni's portrait: it is a speaking likeness, but I did not see Mignard: he was painting madame de Fontevrauld, whom I saw through a hole in the door; I did not think her handsome: the abbé Têtu was jesting freely with her. The Villarses peeped through the hole in the door with me: we were very merry.

The prince, who has raised the siege of Haguenau, is a little surprised to find himself obliged to be on the defensive, and to be intrenched on the side of Schlestat: the gout and the mouth of October will not contribute to make him very comfortable there. I am uneasy about my son: it seems to me as if I were going to have my head in a sack for ten or twelve days; and you judge rightly that I should not leave Paris at this important time without very good reasons. St. Thou dreamed the night before he was killed, that he had had a quarrel with the prince of Orange, and that he had said so many rude things to him, that the prince consigned him to his guards. He told this dream, and it was by these guards that he was killed, foolishly enough, for he would not accept quarter, though he was alone against two hundred. It was a very ridiculous indiscretion. All the world laughs at him, notwithstanding

Voiture has taught us, that it is very uncivil to laugh at the dead. Poor madame de Sanzei flatters herself with vain hopes that her husband is not dead, and will wait till the siege of Tréves is terminated, before she puts on mourning.

Adieu, my dearest, I cannot tell you how much I am yours; though I am more apt than you to express what I feel.

LETTER CCCXXXVI.

TO THE SAME.

Paris, Monday, Sept. 9, 1675.

Adieu, my dearest child, I am just getting into my carriage. I leave Paris for some time, with the vexation of no longer receiving your letters so regularly as usual, nor those of my son, for whom I am under great apprehensions, not so much on account of the prince of Orange being so near, as on account of M. de Luxembourg, who is *in my son's army*, and whose fingers itch violently for an engagement. Alas! do you remember our jest, that poor M. de Turenne was *in your brother's army?* In short, our correspondence will now be all in confusion; and I fear I shall no longer be able to contribute towards your amusements, for all the trifles I used to send you will now be reduced to nothing: so that, if you have any love for me, you will do well to throw my letters by unopened. I am going with the good abbé and Maria; I have two servants on horseback, and six horses: I shall go by way of Orléans and Nantes, and shall write to you upon the road: this is one of my weaknesses, as Monceaux says.

I never met with so adorable a creature as d'Hacqueville. I know not how the rest of the family may be;

but for him, I do not think he has his fellow: I recommended the affair of the seneschal of Rennes to him the other day; he immediately made it his own; it was attended with very great difficulties; he had Parère to contend with; he related it to M. de Pomponne that he might thoroughly understand it: in short, we ought to kiss the ground over which he passes. The seneschal is so surprised to find such an excellent-hearted man in the world, and at having gained his cause, that he thinks me the richest woman in France in having such a friend; and he is right. Whenever you have occasion for his service, you may make use of him therefore, without being under any apprehension of wearying him, as you may likewise of the fat abbé, if you have any bills of exchange to negociate; it is good, you know, to be acquainted with every one's talent.

You will be at no loss for news; our good La Troche will furnish you with every thing of consequence; but, as you say, all is well, the rest of the year will be all peace and tranquillity. Only think of the great prince de Condé retiring and acting upon the defensive, with the month of October and the gout before his eyes*. M. de Lorraine was unwilling that time should be wasted in the siege of Tréves. "You will certainly perish there, gentlemen," said he: "there are four thousand men in Tréves, besides an exasperated marshal of France." And, indeed, the marshal performs wonders; he sweeps the trenches every two or three days in the neatest manner imaginable: but, after all, nothing is impregnable; every thing must at length yield to superior force.

* This campaign was the last, and passes for one of the most glorious, undertaken by the great Condé. It appears that he was not fully appreciated. Louvois hated and feared him; and the court set the tone to all France.

I took my leave yesterday of M. de la Garde; if he would embrace you, let him, and place it to my account. I have a very great esteem and friendship for him. Let me exhort you, my dear child, to be careful of your health, if you have any love for me. I hear you say the same thing to me, and I give you my word I will, for your sake, be particularly careful of mine. Do not amuse yourself by vain inquietudes; it does not agree with your excellent understanding: preserve your courage, and impart a little to me in your letters: it is a good provision in this life. Talk to me a great deal of yourself: all details are interesting, when there is a certain degree of love to make them so.

Pray write to the cardinal: you did not judge well with respect to the cassolette, and I assure you he was not a little piqued at your haughtiness in refusing this last token of his esteem and friendship. A refusal can never sit well in cases of this kind, and where the thing is in itself of so trifling a value, you will find no one to agree with; you and you should always be diffident of following your own opinion in defiance of every other person's.

Yesterday evening I took leave of the handsome prelate; he desired me to lend him my picture, that is, yours, to take to madame de Fontevrauld's; I refused him in the style of a Rabutin, and told him I had refused it to Mademoiselle: at the same time, I carried it into a little room, where it was placed with affection, and received with a wish to please me. I am sure no one will remove it: they know too well how dear this charming picture is to me; and if any one comes here to ask for it, he will be told I have taken it with me: M. de Coulanges will tell you where it is. M. de Pomponne wished to see it the other day; he talked to it, and almost expected it to answer. Your

absence has increased the likeness: it cost me a pang to leave it.

We laughed till the tears came into our eyes about your madame de Charce, and her daughter the fair Phillis of nine and thirty: I think I see her here; you pretend that you have no genius for story-telling, nothing in the world could be related with more humour, nor can any one write more agreeably than you do; but it is grievous to be in a country where they make such a burlesque of their mourning. I thank you for the trouble you have taken to write this story to me: it is a style you do not like, but which has delighted me exceedingly. M. de Coulanges will tell you so. He read this part of your letter admirably. And now I seem to have nothing more to say than, Take me to the Rocks *, so M. l'Abbé let us be gone: the deed is done, my dear countess: adieu.

Je vais partir, belle Hermionne,
Je vais exécuter ce que l'abbé m'ordonne,
Malgré le péril qui m'attend †.

This is merely for the sake of saying something, for our province is now as calm as the Soane.

A grand service for M. de Turenne is now performing at Notre-Dame. Cardinal de Bouillon, and madame d'Elbeuf, came yesterday to ask me to go there, but I am satisfied with that of Saint Denis, which was supe-

* An allusion to the saying of Philoxenes the poet, who, rather than praise the verses of Dionysius the tyrant, said, Take me to the quarries.

† A parody on the parting scene in the opera of Cadmus,

Thus Englished:

Yes, fair Hermione! I leave thee now,
I leave thee, lovely mistress of my fate!
Whither the abbé orders me, I go,
Regardless of the dangers that await.

rior to any I had ever witnessed. Do you not wonder at the effects occasioned by the death of this hero, and at the complexion of affairs, now he is no more? Ah! my dear child, I have long been of your opinion: nothing is of so much value as a great and good soul: it appears in every thing, as through a heart of crystal: it has no concealment, it makes no dupes: we cannot long take the shadow for the substance: we must be good, if we wish to appear so: the world bears no long injustice: you ought to be of this opinion for your own interest.

LETTER CCCXXXVII.

TO THE SAME.

Orléans, Wednesday, Sept. 11, 1675.

At length, my child, I am ready to embark on our Loire; do you remember the pretty voyage you and I once made there together? I shall often think of it. But however terrible your Rhone may be, I wish I was as near trusting myself to its mercy. M. de la Trousse is to return hither on his parole, but is not to have the government of Philippeville. We cannot guess what fortune has in reserve for him, perhaps a musket-ball at last; heavens forbid! I saw the grand-master and madame de la Troche the morning I set out: the latter took me to mass, and waited for my carriage at madame de la Fayette's, where I found the marquis de Saint Maurice, who is returned from England to assist at the funeral of his duke: this is mere form.

I will write to you from all the places I can. You say, that hope is so pleasing. Alas! it must be so in a greater degree than you describe it, to enchant more than half the world in the manner it does. I am one of

its most ardent votaries. I carry with me great uneasiness respecting my son, and leave with pain the opportunity of hearing news of the army. I sent him word the other day, as I did to you, that I was going to put my head into a sack, where I should neither see nor hear any thing that passes in the world.

I shall proceed in my old character, and attempt still to tell you news; you will guess from what author it comes. It is certain that *Quanto* and her friend are really separated: but the damsel is frequently grieved, even to tears, to see how well her friend does without her. He only regretted his liberty, and the safe retreat from the lady of the castle; whatever was the reason, his heart was little interested in any thing farther. He has met with society that pleases him; he is gay, and delighted to be free from trouble. The fair one trembles and weeps, fearing this may imply a diminution of his flame; and if it were otherwise, she would not be without her sorrows. Thus repose is banished. You may make your reflections on this, as on a certain truth: I believe you understand me.

With regard to England, mademoiselle de Keroualle* has been disappointed in nothing; she wished to be the mistress of the king, and she is so. He takes up his abode with her almost every night in the face of the whole court: she has had a son, who has been acknowledged, and presented with two duchies. She amasses treasure, and makes herself feared and respected as much as she can. But she did not foresee that she should find a young actress† in her way, whom the king doats on;

* Louise Renée de Penancoët de Kéroualle, created duchess of Portsmouth in England in 1672, and duchess of d'Aubigny in France in 1684 in her own right and that of Charles Lenox, duke of Richmond, her son.

† Nell Gwyn.

and she has it not in her power to withdraw him from her. He divides his care, his time, and his health, between these two. The actress is as haughty as the duchess of Portsmouth; she insults her, makes faces at her, attacks her, frequently steals the king from her, and boasts of his preference to her. She is young, indiscreet, confident, meretricious, and pleasant; she sings, dances, and acts her part well. She has a son by the king, and wishes to have him acknowledged: she reasons thus: "This duchess," says she, "pretends to be a person of quality; she says she is related to the best families in France; whenever any person of distinction dies, she puts herself in mourning *. If she be a lady of such quality, why does she demean herself to be a courtesan? she ought to be ashamed of herself. As for me, it is my profession; I do not pretend to any thing better. The king maintains me, and I am constant to him at present. He has a son by me: I say he ought to acknowledge him, and I am sure he will, for he loves me as well as he does Portsmouth." This creature gets the upper hand, and discountenances and embarrasses the duchess extremely. I like these original characters. I could find nothing better to send you from Orléans; but this is at least truth.

I am extremely well, my child; and I find the convenience of being a substance that thinks, and reads: were it not for these privileges, our good abbé would amuse me very little. You know he is generally employed in admiring the *beautiful eyes of his casket*; but while he is counting them over, and feasting his

* Mademoiselle Keroualle went into mourning for the king of Sweden; a little after, the king of Portugal died. Her rival appeared in a mourning coach, and made her this proposal: "Let us agree to divide the world: you shall have the kings of the north, and I the kings of the south."

own eyes with them, cardinal Commendon† is a very agreeable companion to me. The weather and the roads are extremely pleasant: we have such clear bright days, as we used to compare to crystal, in which we are neither sensible of cold nor heat. Our equipage would carry us very well by land; it is for our amusement we go by water.

To prevent your inquietude, I am in perfect health; I am very regular in the management of it, with a view to please you. Be not in pain about Maria: she does every thing for me that Helen could do. I foresee your inquietude. I love you, my dearest, and my tenderness is the most delightful employment of my mind.

I do not boast of a friendship with M. le Premier, but I have seen him frequently at M. de la Rochefoucault's, at madame de Lavardin's, at his own house, and twice at mine. He finds me with his friends, and you know what kind of reverberations that causes.

LETTER * CCCXXXVIII.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO MADAME DE COULANGES.

Orléans, Wednesday, Sept. 11, 1675.

We are arrived without any adventure; I slept last night, as I told you I should, at Toury. This morning we passed two men hanged upon trees in the highway: we could not understand this, for wheels seem to be more appropriate to highways; we have been employed

† The Life of Cardinal Commendon by Flechier. He was a Venetian. At the end of the sixteenth century, he was sent by the court of Rome from Germany to Poland, where he was sufficiently skilful to make the decrees of the council of Trent received. His Life, which is here alluded to, is a translation from the Latin of Gratiani.

in guessing the meaning of this novelty; they made a wretched appearance, and I vowed I would inform you of it. Scarcely had we alighted here, when twenty boatmen surrounded us, each boasting the rank of the persons he had had the honour to row, and the excellence of his boat; the knives of Nogent, and the chaplets of Chartres, were not more famous. We were a long time deciding; one appeared too young, the other too old; one was so anxious to convey us, that we suspected him of being a beggar with a rotten boat; the other was proud of having conveyed M. de Chaulnes: at length predestination seemed to point to a well-made lad, whose mustachios, and mode of proceeding, decided us. Adieu, then, my dear cousin: we are going to embark on the beautiful Loire; it is a little subject to overflow, but its waters are the more tranquil.

LETTER CCCXXXIX.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNTESS DE GRIGNAN.

Tours, Saturday, Sept. 14, 1675.

I RECEIVED your letter, my dear, at Orléans, the moment before I went into the boat: it was a great treasure, and a great consolation to me in all my voyage. Among the many agreeable things you write to me, there is one I am peculiarly touched with. You tell me I take a great deal of trouble on your account, but that it is with perfect ease to myself, and that this makes it the highest obligation. This is entering so well into my thoughts, that I am overpaid by this single sentiment. I shall one day have it in my power to give you a very pleasing entertainment, by obliging you with the sight of some of your own letters.

I know not what to say to you more of M. de Tu-

renne, nor of Pertuis; I fear the latter will not be comforted in my absence. I left madame de Vaubrun half mad, madame de Langeron half dead; but, my dear, I will not answer for any thing: I know nothing; my head is in a sack. I hear, however, that Tréves is taken. I doubt Sanzei will hardly be found again; his wife is the more to be pitied. *Quanto gli doveva parere il dubbio buono, se dovea soffire tanto del certo* *. This ought to be decisive.

I suppose M. de la Trousse is permitted to return on his parole, and that he has not lost much of his equipage. I should pity him if he had not recovered the beautiful eyes of his casket: this folly struck us both at the same time; I had just written it to you.

I easily comprehend the agreeable things madame de Vaudemont writes to you: she is very amiable. I honour the friendship you preserve for each other, in spite of all that separates you: I commend you for continuing your correspondence with such fidelity.

I slept last night at Veret †; M. d'Effiat knew of my voyage; he came to the river-side with the abbé to receive me. His house surpasses every thing I have seen in point of beauty, comfort, and magnificence: the country is more delightful than any other spot upon the habitable globe; I should never finish, if I attempted to describe it. M. and madame Dangeau came here to dine with me, and are gone to Valencé. M. d'Effiat accompanied us in our return; we travelled about a league and a half through a road covered with flowers; he has just taken his leave of us with a thousand different expressions of friendship for you.

* How delightful doubt must be to her, if certainty is to make her so wretched!

† This fine seat on the bank of the Cher, belongs at present to the count d'Agenois.

I have nothing to write upon, but a little paper borrowed from the hostess, which obliges me to conclude. To-morrow we return to our boat, and steer our course to Saumur. I saw at Véret letters from Paris. It is thought the prince of Orange will retake Liege. I am afraid M. de Luxembourg will endeavour to hinder him, or attempt some siege: this alarms me for my poor Sévigné. It is said, the prince will not remain in Germany all the winter, and that M. de Schomberg will be sent thither. My dear, it is not for the sake of telling you news, but only of talking to you, that I write all this. I remembered the other day at Blois, a charming place, where we walked with the poor little count de Chapelles, who made a parody on this sonnet of Urania,

Je veux finir mes jours dans l'amour de Marie *.

My dear, how much I am vexed to leave you, and how dearly I love you! I embrace you with a heart that knows no equal. If this offends M. de Grignan, I am sorry for it, and appease him with a kiss.

The History of the Crusades is very fine; but the style of father Maimbourg displeases me much. He has gleaned all the false delicacies which are to be found in the conversation of such as affect politeness. If we excuse his style, it is for the sake of the history.

* "I will end my days in the love of Maria." The first line of the celebrated sonnet of Voiture.

LETTER CCCXL.

TO THE SAME.

Tuesday, September 17, 1675.

Here is an odd date for you:

Je suis dans un batteau,
Dans le courant de l'eau,
Fort loin de mon chateau*,

I think I might add,

Ah quelle folie†!

for the water is so very low, and we are so often aground, that I heartily wish for my carriage again, but that is out of reach for some time. The water becomes dull when one is alone. A count des Chapelles, and a mademoiselle de Sévigné, are wanting to enliven the scene. In short, it is mere folly to take a boat at Orléans, or even at Paris; but it is the fashion, as it is at Chartres to buy chaplets. I told you I saw the abbé d'Effiat at his noble mansion. I wrote to you from Tours, from thence we went to Saumur, where we saw Vineuil, and wept again over M. de Turenne. He seems greatly affected with his loss; you will pity him when I tell you he is in a place where no one ever saw this hero. Vineuil is grown very old, very phthisicky, very drivelling, and very devout; but he is still witty:

* From the bottom of a boat,
On the water afloat,
Not a house in our sight.
† This is folly outright.

he sends you a thousand and a thousand compliments. It is thirty leagues from Saumur to Nantes: we determined to go there in two days, and to get into Nantes as this day: with this view we were upon the water some part of the night; but unfortunately we ran aground about two hundred yards from the place where we were to go ashore to sleep, and could not get out of the boat; so we put back and landed at another place, and, following the barking of a dog, we got about midnight to a little hut, but the most wretched place you can possibly conceive: there we found two or three old women spinning, and some fresh straw, upon which we all lay down without taking off our clothes. I should have laughed heartily at this scene, had it not been for thinking of our poor abbé, whom I was vexed to have exposed to such a fatiguing journey. At day-break we reimbarked, but were again so completely stranded, that it was above an hour before we could get afloat again; however, we were resolved to get to Nantes, though against both wind and tide. We were forced to row all the way. When we got there, I received your letters; and as I find the post must pass through Ingrande, I shall leave this little note by the way. I am very well, and only want somebody to chat with. I shall write to you from Nantes, as you may suppose. I am very impatient to hear from you, and about M. de Luxembourg and his army: for my head has been in a sack these nine days. The History of the Crusades is very amusing, particularly to those who have read Tasso, and who see their old friends again in prose and in history; but with respect to the author's style, I am his very humble servant. The Life of Origen is divine*.

* This is the work of Dufosse, of Port-Royal. It had just been published, with the Life of Tertullian, by the same author.

LETTER CCCXLI.

TO THE SAME.

Nantes, Friday, Sept. 20, 1675.

I HAVE just received my dear child's letter, wherein she supposes me a wanderer on the borders of the ocean: can any thing be more just than these suppositions? I wrote to you constantly on the road, and even from my little boat as long as I was able. I arrived here about nine o'clock at night, at the foot of this great castle wall, at the very place whence our cardinal (de Retz) made his escape: we heard a small bark rowing towards us, and a voice that cried, Who goes there? I had my answer ready, and in an instant I saw M de Lavardin come out of the little door with five or six flambeaux before him, and accompanied by several of the nobles; he came up to me, and held out his hand with all the politeness imaginable. I am persuaded this must have made a very pretty scene from the water, and I know it gave my boatmen no small idea of their passengers' consequence. I ate a very hearty supper, for I had neither eaten nor slept for nearly four and twenty hours. I slept at M. de Haroüis': there is nothing but feasting and merriment going on at the castle and here. M. de Lavardin never leaves me: he seems delighted with an opportunity of conversing with me: he has given me the whole detail of the history of this province, and the different conduct of those who have the government of it; it is extraordinary, and has amused me; and in return I acquaint him with every thing relative to our province. He has many great and good qualities; he is sometimes imperious and haughty, and this has hitherto done him service; and on a sudden, he is all mildness and sub-

mission to the governor, which contributes still more to enhance his reputation. He has given the title of *Monseigneur* to Feuillade and Duras, and, by way of familiarity, has thrown in *My most honoured lord.* This is some comfort for you, and may serve to show you what style you must make use of, if you write at all to these gentlemen.

I saw our sisters of Sainte-Marie who still adore you, and remember every syllable you said while you were with them. We are going to Silleraye*: M. de Lavardin will take me there, and from thence to the Rocks, where I shall be on Tuesday. Alas! my child, what a misery! can you endure my letters now? I thank M. de Grignan for regretting them. The abbé is well, and I am, if possible, much better. M. de Guitaut has written to inform me of his wife's being safely delivered, which gives me no small pleasure, as I was under some uneasiness about her. I have some suspicion of you; but I dare not suffer myself to dwell upon a thought of that kind, which could not fail to afflict me greatly, were I assured it were the case. M. de Coulanges tells me that poor madame de Sanzei has at length put on mourning; La Mousse was with her at Autri, but is come back again, though she has more need of him now than ever. I am still under apprehensions for my son. I fancy that M. de Luxembourg has still a great desire to risk a little battle: oh! it is a cruel profession.

I am rejoiced, my dear, to find that the archbishop is with you; I guess the nature of your conversations, and all your little propositions and resolutions: I would not have you undertake to remove my interest in your affairs; it is, in other words, telling me to die, for as

* An estate belonging to M. d'Harouïs.

long as I am in existence, I shall be more anxious and occupied with them, than with any thing that can happen to myself: calculate upon this, and pity me for being of no greater service to you than I am; for in short, what can I do for you? Salute the archbishop very respectfully for me; I wish him health for the sake of his family and friends. M. d'Haroüis makes you a million of compliments: we read the newspapers here; I thought the passage you remarked, very droll. M. de Montgaillard was killed five or six days ago, by a brother of Tonquedec's; it seems they had a quarrel, and Montgaillard fell upon the other in a violent rage, and gave him several blows with the cane he used to such good purpose upon his lieutenant; Pongan drew his sword, and ran him through the body; he died instantly: this scene passed in a small town in Lower Britany, where M. de Chaulnes happened to be at the same time. You shall not want for news from Britany. I pity you, my poor child, in having such letters as mine to read, and I pity myself for having such stuff to write you.

I was under some uneasiness this morning about my son: but I have since seen by all the papers, that M. de Luxembourg intends to remain in Flanders. You have doubtless heard of the infamous capitulation of Tréves*. I think it was very fortunate for the marshal that he was only delivered prisoner to the enemy. The

* Marshal de Crequi, after having defended Tréves for the space of a month with the utmost valour, was at last made prisoner of war by the perfidy of a captain of horse, named Boisjourdan, who found means to stir up the whole garrison against him, and being let out at the gates of the town, privately went over to the besiegers, and drew up articles of capitulation unknown to the marshal. This wretch was afterwards taken, as he was endeavouring to escape into the enemy's territories, and had his head severed from his body at Mentz.

confederate army will now join that of the imperialists; but we are certain that the prince will not be obliged to fight, unless he chooses it: this is one of the advantages of being a good chess-player. M. de Coulanges is going to Lyons; he writes me word, that he has left your picture in pledge with a merchant for some money he was obliged to borrow of him. The dear picture! I am naturally fond of good painting; but I must own that its being so very like you, does not add a little to its value.

You have reason to approve the report that prevails of my being on my way to Provence: ought we not, in justice, to follow the feelings of our own heart, when they are so lively and just as mine? Ah, what folly! for while I say this, I am at Nantes. I shall be sorry when your five months' stay at Grignan is over: Aix and Lambesc are far less pleasing to me than the unrestrained freedom of your chateau. You have paid all your visits: that is well. I have not written to the princess since the death of her son; how can one write on such subjects? and what is become of Vardes, and my friend Corbinelli? Felix's* son is bishop of Apt or Gap.

Recollect, my child, that I receive your letters on the ninth day after they are written: I tell you this, *fuor di proposito* (unseasonably), to remove your idea that I am at the Antipodes. Poor Vaubrun is still in an abyss of grief. I am very much of your opinion, that there are certain losses for which we ought not to receive consolation, and which should prevent us from seeing visitors: we ought, as our good cardinal said, to draw the bolts upon ourselves. The little cardinal (de Bouil-

* M. Felix was first surgeon to the king, and his son was afterwards translated to the bishopric of Chalons upon Soane.

lon) still thinks of his uncle. I hold in contempt the service of Notre Dame after that of St. Denis. I return to Cavoye, whom I was not at all pleased with at Paris: he was at court, and in good health: will they dare tell us that he was afraid of weeping? Poor little dear, what a great misfortune! I wish you could have seen Barillon and the good Boucherat.

LETTER CCCXLII.

TO THE SAME.

Sillerayc, Tuesday, Sept. 24, 1675.

I AM now, my dear child, in a place where you were one day with me; but you would not know it again, for there is not one stone left upon another of what were then standing. M. de Harouïs has built a large house here: it is thirty toises in front, with two wings, and two pavilions; he had the plan from a celebrated architect of Nantes, but as he was not on the spot himself three times while it was building, it has been very badly executed. Our abbé is quite grieved at it; as for M. d'Harouïs, he only laughs at it. He took us there last evening. M. de Lavardin dined with us, and detains me till to-morrow morning. It is impossible for the attentions, confidence, and consideration of M. de Lavardin to me, to be exceeded: I assure you M. de Grignan himself could not show me greater hospitality nor greater kindness. I dare not praise him more to you; but he has very solid virtues, and a disinterestedness which fits him for command. I shall lull you to sleep some day with the affairs of this province: they are worthy of attention, and you must now suffer me to write them as news. My letters, compared with those you receive from Paris, will have the air of being

written by a lady of a province, who relates and confides to you the intrigues of Avignon, or some other town. In short, my dear child, nothing but your affection will make you prize my letters. We have heard news from the court: it is said that M. Felix is not bishop of Gap, but of Digne. How happy I think you in having M. de Saint-Paul and him! Would to God they were with us! you would have much less uneasiness. I wish you also a little M. Laurens, who, it is said, will be placed in the first conveyance. I had intended to send my compliments to Molinier, but it is to the archbishop and the coadjutor I ought to address myself. They are companions and brothers: I am delighted.

Our poor Lower-Bretons flock together forty or fifty at a time in the fields, and when they see the soldiers, they fall upon their knees, and say, "*mea culpa*;" this is the only word of *French* they know; as our French said, that in Germany the only word of *Latin* that was said at mass, was *Kyrie eleison*. They still hang these poor Lower-Bretons; they ask for nothing but something to drink, and some snuff, and to be dispatched; and *de Caron pas un mot*. Out of the seven days I was at Nantes, I spent three afternoons with our sisters of Sainte-Marie: they have sense, they adore you, and are delighted with the little friend * I always carry with me; for if it were to be spoiled, as M. de Langlade said to M. d'Andilly, what would become of me without it? M. de Lavardin sends you a thousand compliments, and M. d'Harouis will, I think, write to you, being your enthusiastic admirer: I love him, as you know, and I take pleasure in observing him. I wish you could see this mind so superior to the trifles that occupy others;

* Miniature picture of madame de Grignan.

his mild and benevolent temper; his soul, as great as M. de Turenne's, appears to me worthy of a kingdom, and I wonder at the way in which we estimate the moral virtues. I am certain if M. d'Haroüis were to die, there would be as many masses said for him, as for M. de Turenne. We take our departure to-morrow for the Rocks, where I shall find letters from you: I have been in this country two days longer than I wished, which is the reason I have heard but twice from you. I am well: how are you, my child? do you sleep? is your north-east wind tractable? It is delightful weather here.

LETTER CCCXLIII.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, Sept. 20, 1675.

I WROTE to you, my dear child, from every place where it was possible to do it; but as I was not so exact with respect to our dear d'Hacqueville, and the rest of our friends, they have been very uneasy about me, for which I am really extremely obliged to them: they did the Loire the honour to suppose that it had swallowed me up; alas, poor thing! I am sure I should have been the first it had ever served so unhandsomely; I found no other inconvenience from it, but that its waters were too shallow. D'Hacqueville writes me word that he knows not what to say to you of me, and that he fears his silence respecting me will alarm you. Are you not too good in having appeared so solicitous about me, that we are anxious to spare you every trifling uneasiness? You have so thoroughly convinced me of this, that I have thought of nothing but of writing to you punctually. I set out from Sillerave the day after I wrote

to you, which was on Wednesday; M. de Lavardin put me into my carriage, and M. d'Haroüis loaded me with provisions of all kinds. We arrived here on Thursday. The first person I met was mademoiselle du Plessis, more frightful, more foolish, and more impertinent, than ever. I am really ashamed of the liking she has taken to me, and I swear *by this good sword*, that I will not encourage it by the least complaisance, friendship, good-nature, or mark of approbation: I say the rudest things possible to her, but, unfortunately, she takes them all in good part, and thinks I am jesting with her. You may judge whether I tell you truth or not, after the story of the box on the ear, which I thought would would have killed Pomenars with laughing. She is constantly at my elbow, but at present, indeed, she is taking the drudgery of the house off my hands; she is cutting out napkins for me.

I found my woods perfectly beautiful and shady; the trees which were so little when you last saw them, are all grown very large, beautiful, and flourishing; they have been cut, and now form a delightful shade; they are from forty to fifty feet high: is there not something of maternal tenderness in this detail? Consider, I planted them myself, and saw them, as M. de Monbason says of his children, when *they were no higher than this;* it is a retreat formed expressly for meditation. I am persuaded you would make the most of it, were you here; I assure you, I am far from neglecting it: if the thoughts are not made black by it, they are at least turned to a dark grey; I think of you at every step, I regret your absence, I long for your company; then your health, your affairs, the distance you are at from me, all this makes terrible havock in my poor brain: it requires the most perfect submission to the will of Providence, to endure what I do without despair. As to

health, I am as well in that respect as I was ten years ago. I cannot conceive whence I derive this perpetual spring; my constitution every way answers the purposes I require of it: I read, I amuse myself; if I have any thing to do, I do it before the abbé, as if he were in another place: this agreeable unconstraint, together with a little hope, just prevents me from being at the expense of a cord to hang myself with. I found a letter of yours the other day in which you called me, your good mamma; it was written at Saint-Mary, when you were ten years old, and you related to me the story of madame Amelot, who fell head over heels from her parlour to the cellar; your style was good, even then. I found several other letters to mademoiselle de Sévigné. All these circumstances bring you to my mind, for what else could make me think of you? I received no letters from you by the last post, which makes me somewhat uneasy. Neither have I heard any thing more from the coadjutor, La Garde, Mirepoix, Bellièvre, than if they were in another world; I intend to rouse them a little.

Do you not admire the king's good fortune? They inform me, that *his highness my father** is dead; he was a good enemy: they say likewise, that the imperialists have repassed the Rhine, to defend the emperor from the Turk, who presses him on the side of Hungary: all these are what we may call lucky stars for his majesty, but make us humble in Britany, for fear of experiencing heavier punishments. I am going to pay a visit to the good princess de Tarente; she has already sent me her compliments twice, and always inquires

* Charles IV., duke of Lorraine, died the 17th of September: madame de l'Isle-bonne his daughter, whenever she spoke of him, used to style him, *his highness, my father*.

very kindly after you—if she pays her court to me in this way, she will certainly succeed. Your observation on Saint-Thou is excellent, that at least he cannot be accused of not having told his dream till after his misfortune. I pity you for not having your own letters to read; but though they constitute my dearest and only pleasure, though I know their value, I am sorry to receive so many of them.

Adieu, my beloved child: I frequently hear from your brother; he is very much concerned at not being able to get rid of this wretched guidonage; but he should consider that there are a number of persons present and pressing, who are to be provided for first, and who indeed have merited it by their services; these will always be preferred to one that is absent, and considered as already provided for; and who has besides had no opportunity of showing himself by any thing, except his impatience in being so long a subaltern; and that they do not care a farthing about. Well! this is precisely what we used to say, that after a long and wearisome voyage, we found ourselves nine hundred leagues from a harbour, and so on, you know.

LETTER CCCXLIV.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, October 2.

My dear child, I received your letter two days ago: this was the tenth day; I might have received it sooner. If the post had arrived at Paris on Tuesday, I should have received it on Friday, instead of Monday. These calculations remind me of the good Chisières; but I hope you will bear with them, and consider whence they proceed, and to what they tend. Your letter af-

fected me sensibly: I fancy you are not unconcerned at this further removal; you speak of it with tenderness: for my part, I felt, and still feel, it painfully. I thought the distance we were at before was sufficient; a hundred leagues added to it increases my sorrow; I cannot dwell on this thought without a fresh occasion for your lectures. What you say in two words of the little profit you receive from them yourself, is a tenderness that pleases me extremely. You say you would have me write to you of my woods; the barrenness of the subject cannot make my letters displeasing to you. Well then, my child, I will tell you that I pay homage in them to my favourite planet, the moon; Plessis is going away; the good abbé fears the dew; I, who never feel it, remain there with Beaulieu and my servants till eight o'clock: the walks possess such beauty, tranquillity, repose, and silence, that I cannot enjoy them too much. Whether I think of you with affection or sensibility, I leave you to guess, for I am not competent to describe what I feel. I am here alone, and very much at my ease; but I am apprehensive of company, that is, of constraint.

I have been to visit the good princess (madame de Tarente); she received me with transport. Her opinion of you, shows she has not altogether the taste of a German: she is pleased with your person, and with what she has seen of your mind. She does not want sense in her way. She loves her daughter*; she is wholly taken up with the thoughts of her; she tells me what she suffers from her absence, as the only person who can enter into her feelings. I can give you a very good account of the court of Denmark; I know

* Charlotte Emilie Henriette de la Trémoille, married May 29, 1680, to Antoine d'Altembourg, count d'Oldenbourg.

nothing of that of France, but I shall not fail to send you the news of Copenhagen. I must acquaint you, that the princess de la Trémouille is a favourite of the queen, who is her first cousin. There is a prince, the king's brother, very agreeable and very gallant, whom we have seen in France, and who is passionately in love with the princess; and the princess may, perhaps, have some disposition not to hate him: but there is a favourite who is very powerful, called count Kinghstoghmklifel, you understand *: this count is likewise in love with the princess, but she hates him; not but that he is brave, well made, has wit, and politeness, but he is not a gentleman by descent, and that thought is enough to make a lady faint. The king is his con-

* There is no doubt that madame de Sévigné amused herself by making this name worse than it really was. The fact is this. The favourite alluded to is *Schumaker* (in French *Cordonnier*), count de Griffenfeldt, high chancellor of Denmark, and very celebrated in the history of that kingdom. The greatest talents and most memorable services had raised him from the situation of a secretary, to this exalted dignity, and to the unlimited favour of Christian V. He was, indeed, very much in love with madame de la Trémouille, and on the point of deserting a princess of the blood, to whom he was betrothed. But the romance, of which madame de Sévigné gives us only the first volume, ended speedily, and tragically. In the year 1676, Griffenfeldt was arrested, tried, sentenced to lose his head, and, through favour, thrown into a prison, from which he was liberated twenty-three years afterwards, only to die in a few months. Extortion, venality, and high treason, were his crimes. He owed his misfortune partly to his connexions with France. Lewis XIV. wishing to employ the Swedes against the Dutch, his ambassador Terlon stirred every thing to prevent a war between Denmark and Sweden. Griffenfeldt privately, and against the king's wish, seconded him, either from the belief that he could govern his master more easily in peace than in war, or from being gained over to Lewis by the liberality of his presents. It appears clear, however, that he abused his power over his master, whose pride the jealous nobles roused, and irritated.

tidant, and is desirous to conclude this marriage: the queen is in the interest of her cousin, and favours the pretensions of the prince: but the king opposes him, and the favourite makes him feel the weight of his jealousy and of his power. The princess weeps, and writes to her mother letters of forty pages. She has demanded her dismission from the court, but neither the king nor the queen will consent to it, though for different reasons. The prince is removed from the court on several pretexts, but he always finds some plausible occasion to return. At present they are engaged in a war with the Swedes; and the rivals are piquing themselves on the performance of romantic actions to please the princess. The favourite said to her, as he took his leave, "I see, madame, in what manner you treat me, but I am sure it is not in your power to refuse me your esteem." This is the first volume of the history; you shall not fail to have the sequel of it; I am resolved, that no person in France shall be better acquainted than you with the intrigues of Denmark. When I have no more to say of this court, I shall entertain you with Pilois*; there is no medium between those important subjects. I must let you know, however, that these are very great secrets: above all, I beg you not to pronounce the name of the count Kinghstoghmkllfel.

I am very glad you sleep at Grignan, and that you are not devoured. Think not that you are the only one who is in pain respecting the health of another. I think incessantly of yours. Your flowers and walks delight me. I hope I shall have some nosegays from the large garden I am so well acquainted with: I had intended to ask you for a few of your fine grapes;

* Her gardener at the Rocks.

what a shame to offer me none! but it is because they are not yet ripe.

In the name of God, my dear child, tell me what you think of my refusal of your picture to *Quanto's* sister *? You suppose, I fear, that I have been too rude: answer me this. I followed my first impulse, and am apprehensive I have displeased the coadjutor. I hear he will soon be with you; when I reflect on the society he will meet with in the country, it is matter of wonder to me how he can regret these every-day women. La Trousse is at Paris, as you know; they talk of giving him the situation of Froulai; this will be a step for our poor guide.

This is a terrible year for marshal de Crequi: I think with you, that he is no where in safety or repose, but amongst the enemy. He has a little dissipated the legions that were intrusted to him; but they obeyed him too well on the day of battle.

I am informed from all hands, that M. de Mirepoix is very much dissatisfied as to the constraint of keeping his word, and that we shall not get the ratification from him but by dint of sword.

I forgot to tell you, that the good Tarente returned my visit two days after I had been to see her. It was great news in the country; she was delighted with your miniature: our Denmark girls furnish us with conversation. Write some little civility about the princess, which I shall be delighted to show her: she is to be my physician when I am ill: she is clever, and has promised me a wonderful essence, which has cured her of her horrible vapours. Three drops are to be taken in any liquid, and you are cured as if by magic. I am in perfect health at present, but there is no harm in hav-

* Madame de Fontevrault.

ing a remedy at hand. I find you have lost your good method of thanking me, which was rejoicing with me at the opportunities that offered for serving you: that was delightful. Pray give my compliments to the archbishop, and embrace M. de Grignan for me. I am wholly yours, my dear child: this, you will say, is something new.

LETTER CCCXLV.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, October 6, 1675.

Indeed, my dear child, you relate a most lamentable story about your poor lost letters; was it Baro who was guilty of this folly? You were all gay, and in high spirits, thinking you had entertained your friends completely; but I pity the archbishop the most, as I know he never sets pen to paper, but on affairs of importance, and then, to find that he has taken all this pains only to have his letter lost in a bog, or tumbled down a precipice, is really provoking. As for M. de Grignan, he is discouraged from letter-writing for the rest of his life. What an accident this, to befall an indolent man! you will see that he will never write again, for fear of losing his labour. If you acquaint the coadjutor with this misfortune, he will not fail to make the most of it. I can easily comprehend your vexation, and I also enter fully into what you endure at leaving Grignan to be subjected to the restraint of a town: liberty is an inestimable blessing; you feel it more than any one, and I pity you more than I can express. You will neither have Vardes nor Corbinelli with you, who would have been a great addition to your society.

You ought to have told me the names of the four

ladies who came to assassinate you: for my part, I have always time to guard myself against disagreeable company; when I find they are coming on one side, I walk out of the way on the other; this is a trick that I played the seneschal's wife of Vitré, no longer ago than yesterday, and then I scolded my servant, for not acquainting me of her being there: if you ask me how I can excuse my conduct, I reply, it is the park puts such tricks into my head. Do you remember one day that we avoided the Fouesnels in that manner? I walk a great deal, these groves are extremely beautiful: I work too as you do, but, thank heaven, I have not a little impertinent Montgobert with me, to put me to my shifts. I cannot imagine how you can endure this humiliation: I do not soil my silk with my wool, I am very well pleased to go my own way; it seems to me as if I were only ten years old, and that a little sampler has been given me to play with: your chairs must be very ugly, that you prefer your bed to them. I am extremely delighted with what Montgobert writes to me; there is a poignancy in her style, and a manner that is very pleasing: it is a pleasure to have so agreeable a companion in a house: I had such a one once in my life, to my no small joy. M. d'Angers wrote me word the other day that she is an angel.

I thought madame d'Albret's answer very droll; and that it contained more wit than usual. It appeared to me excellent; the *affectionate servant* is hard of digestion: the monseigneur is well established. You were highly amused then, my child, with my narrative from Orleans: I laughed at it myself; it was all I had left in my budget, that I thought worth sending you. You are very good to take pleasure in my diffuse and dry descriptions of my woods and my house; you certainly do it purely out of love to me. But I think I

made pretty well up for it, by my news from Denmark. The city of Rennes is threatened with having the parliament removed to Dinan; this would completely ruin the province. The punishment that is to be inflicted on that city will make no small noise.

My son writes me word, that in all probability he shall soon be with me here. Have you not got La Garde with you yet? and pray, where is our coadjutor? You found his harangue exactly what I described; and that part, *the event of war is uncertain*, was the happiest and most agreeable turn in the world: never was any thing so much applauded. I hear M. de Villars is going ambassador to Savoy; I have likewise received letters from Nantes: if the marquis de Lavardin, and M. d'Haroüis, were concerned in the gazette of that place, you would certainly have found an article in it about my arrival and departure. I return with interest, my dear child, your concern for Britany; every thing, for twenty leagues round you, is of consequence to me. An Augustin came here the other day, a kind of wandering friar, who had been all over Provence, and who mentioned M. de Grignan and M. d'Arles to me several times: I thought him a clever man; but I am certain, had I been at Aix, I should not even have looked at him.

A-propòs, did I mention to you an excellent telescope that amused us exceedingly in the boat? It is really a master-piece of its kind; it is a still better one than that which the abbé left with you at Grignan. This glass brings objects quite home that are at three leagues' distance; alas! that it would bring those which are at two hundred! You may easily guess the use we made of it on the banks of the Loire, but I have found a new method of using it, which is this: you know that one end brings objects nearer to you, and the other

throws them to a great distance; now this end I turn towards mademoiselle du Plessis, and in a moment I see her three leagues from me. I tried this experiment the other day on her, and the rest of my neighbours; this was amusing, but nobody knew what I meant by it; if there had been any one to whom I could have given the hint, the pleasure would have been greater. When tired with disagreeable company, it is only to send for the glass, and look through it at the end that distances the objects. Ask Montgobert, if she would not have laughed heartily. This is a pretty subject to talk nonsense upon. If you have Corbinelli with you, let me recommend the use of the glass to you. Adieu, my dear; we are not mountains, as you say, so I hope to embrace you a little nearer than two hundred leagues: but you are going still farther off; I have a great mind to set out for Brest. It is very hard, in my opinion, that the grand-duchess should not have the good Rarai as her lady of honour; the Guisardes have appointed La Sainte-Même to the office. I hear that La Trousse's good fortune is doubled, and that he will have de Froulai's situation*.

LETTER CCCXLVI.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, October 9, 1675.

I RECEIVED on Monday morning your letter of Sunday se'nnight: this is excellent dispatch, but alas, my dear child, it is all at an end; you are going to remove farther off, and I must no longer expect such regularity.

* M. de Cavoye obtained the situation of grand-maréchale-des-logis, vacant by the death of M. de Froulai, who was killed at Consarbruck.

I greatly sympathize with you in the regret with which you leave Grignan; the life you lead there, is much better suited to your taste, than the continual parade you are obliged to keep up in great towns, and an eternal round of ceremony, that is insupportable. I have written to d'Hacqueville, to desire him not to complain to me of the world of business he has upon his hands, for I know it is what he is fond of: he writes to you three times a week; now you would be very well contented to hear from him but once in that time, and the fat abbé would excuse him another; so you see how easy he might make it to himself. I have proposed the same thing to him on my part, and write to him but once in eight or ten days, by way of setting him the example, but it is to no purpose: he does not understand such an act of indulgence, and will write, as the judge would judge, right or wrong. I am really very sorry for the poor man, for I am sure all this fatigue must at last kill him: were you to see his tables on Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, you would think you were at the general post-office. For my part, I do not kill myself with writing; I read, I work, I walk, and frequently do nothing; *Bella cosa far niente**, says the motto on one of my trees; the other answers, *Amor odit inertes*†; one does not know which to believe, but this I know, that I do not like to confuse my brains with too much writing. I love to write to you indeed, because I can talk to you, gossip with you, and because I could not do without it; but I write to others, only because I must.

I had a letter yesterday from Coligni, in which he

* How delightful is indolence!

† Love hates the slothful.

asks my consent to marry my niece de Bussy. Ah! I give it him with all my heart: he is called Langheac, it is a family that our cardinal has praised to the skies. A propos, he is employed in making medicines; he certainly must stand in great need of them, when he can bring himself to the trouble of making them. Pray do not neglect writing to him; you owe him at least that mark of respect and gratitude: you need be under no fear of breaking in upon his meditation; he is not yet in the third heaven. I have heard in secret, a circumstance that gives me no small uneasiness, which is, that cardinal d'Estrées does all he possibly can, both by himself and his friends, to make the pope change his resolution, with respect to our cardinal's hat, and to give it to M. de Marseilles: I assure you, a dagger would not pierce me more than a thing of that kind. And then our cardinal is continually teasing the pope, to consider the reasons he has offered in his letter, for divesting himself of his dignity: now if they should take advantage of this unlucky circumstance, to make his holiness change his opinion, would it not be enough to throw us all into despair? I tell you this in confidence: I had it from d'Hacqueville, who may perhaps have told you of it likewise; if so, you will use your own discretion. In the mean time, I assure you, I hate d'Estrées most heartily.

M. de Chaulnes is bringing four thousand men into Rennes to punish the inhabitants; nothing can exceed the confusion of that city, and the unspeakable hatred that the whole province bears to the governor. We cannot tell where our states will be held now. I have desired M. de Lavardin and La Trousse to send me back my son, if they are not going to do any thing more this year: I want him much to be here for a short

time, that he may see how completely we deceive ourselves, in thinking we have wealth when we have only estates. The poor exiles* on the coasts of the Loire know nothing of the crimes laid to their charge, and are very uneasy under the uncertainty. Vassé was at a place about six leagues from Varet, so that I could not see him.

I am grieved at my little girl's cold; I feel more than common affection for her, and place to my own account all your kindness to her: I return the love she displayed for me the moment her reason dawned, by giving her a place in my heart. I am still at my Crusades: you cannot fail of being delighted with Judas Maccabeus; he was a great hero; what a shame it will be if you do not finish this book! What would you have? the history, and the style, every thing is divine. Adieu, most lovely, and most beloved! Count the hearts over which you reign, and do not forget mine in the list. You will now have the coadjutor with you, and you will both be happy. They play extravagantly high at Versailles: the *hoca*† is forbidden at Paris under pain of death, and yet it is played at court: five or six thousand pistoles of a morning is nothing to lose. This is no better than picking of pockets. I beseech you to banish this game from amongst you.

I am tired with perpetually hearing that the imperialists have repassed the Rhine: no, they have not repassed it yet; I wish with all my heart they would do

* Messieurs d'Olonne, de Vassé, and de Vineuil, were sent into banishment. After they were recalled, the king one day asked M. de Vineuil how he passed his time at Saumur, the place of his exile. M. de Vineuil answered his majesty, that he went every day to the town-hall to talk of the news; and that one day a dispute arose, about who was the eldest, his majesty or Monsieur his brother.

† A game at cards.

one thing or the other. I have acquainted M. de Lavardin with the affair of M. d'Ambres; he was frequently thinking of it. So our grandees † are a little mortified; they may easily judge that the person who gave the decision is interested in the support of dignities of his own creating. Well, you must follow the times; this does not happen to be the most favourable one for you.

LETTER *CCCXLVII.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

The Rocks, Oct. 9, 1675.

THE marriage of mademoiselle de Bussy, then, is quite certain. Be assured I am delighted at it. I have received a very handsome compliment from M. de Coligni. I see plainly, that you have not failed to inform him that I am your elder, and that my approbation can, at least; do him no harm.

This word harm reminds me of a little anecdote which made me laugh heartily the other day, and which I cannot forbear relating to you. A lad was brought to justice charged with having got a girl with child, and defended himself by saying, "Please your worship, I do not think I have done any harm there, but I am not the father of the child." Pardon me, my dear cousin, I thought there was humour and simplicity in his answer. If a little story of this kind should fall in your way, do not keep it to yourself.

But to return to M. de Coligni. It is certain my approbation can do him no harm. His letter is not that

† This relates to the title of *monseigneur*, which the old nobility refused to give to the marshals of France, till the king decided the controversy in favour of the latter.

of a fool, and any man who can pay a compliment in this style, must possess both judgement and understanding. I sincerely wish it for the sake of my niece, for whom I have a great regard. At all events, the lessons you give him, when to be grave, and when to be gay, are very good in domestic life. I follow the rules you prescribe to prolong existence. I am never in bed more than seven hours, and I eat sparingly: I add to your precepts walking a great deal, but the worst is, that I cannot prevent sombre thoughts from intruding into my long gloomy avenues. Sadness is poison to us, and the source of the vapours. You are right in thinking this disorder is imaginary: you have admirably defined it; it is sorrow that gives birth to, and fear that nourishes, it. To be with you, would be my best remedy: sorrow would be unknown to me then, and you would teach me to lose the fear of death. I have been here nearly a fortnight; I came by way of the Loire, and found the row delightful. I called upon the abbé d'Effiat as I passed, who has a charming house, and saw Vineuil also at Saumur. The latter is become religious: this is a very natural feeling in misfortune and old age. I find them less patient than you, because they have less health, less strength of mind, and less philosophy.

I spent a few days at Nantes, where M. de Lavardin and M. de Harouis treated me like a queen. At length I reached this desert, where I found walks that were formed under my direction, the trees of which afford me a shade that reminds me I am no longer young. The good abbé has never quitted me. We employ ourselves in settling our affairs, and I take advantage of his kindness in assisting me. Nothing can be more exact and regular than our accounts. One little circumstance

only is wanting to complete our satisfaction, which is, to receive money. But no such thing is to be seen here; in fact, cash is dreadfully deficient. Are you as badly off in Bourgogne?

I do not think I shall spend the winter here: but if I return to Paris, it will be on my daughter's affairs; for it must be owned I have a great affection for her. I say nothing of my son: I love him however very much, and his interests occupy me almost as much as my daughter's do. Adieu, count. Give me a little information respecting the wedding. Langhac is a high-sounding name for grandeur and antiquity. I have heard it praised to the skies by cardinal de Retz. He is in retirement. What is your opinion of his retreat? The world, through spite at not being able to vilify so noble an intention, says he will soon be tired of it. Well, so much the better. Wait till he does leave it, and, in the mean time, be silent. In whatever light this action is viewed, it is glorious; and if every one knew as I do, that its motive was purely a religious desire to work out his salvation, together with a horror for his past life, it would not fail to be universally applauded.

LETTER * CCCXLVIII.

FROM THE COUNT DE BUSSY TO MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Chaseu, Oct. 29, 1675 †.

I RECEIVED your letter yesterday, my dear madam, and it gave me the same pleasure that your letters always do. Your niece is at length on the brink of execution;

† This Letter has been placed out of the order of its date, because it is an answer to the preceding one.

she will find what she wanted. A-propos: this brings the poor chevalier de Rohan† to my remembrance, who meeting madame d' *** late one evening, alone in a gallery at Fontainbleau, asked her what she was looking for. "Nothing;" said she. "Faith, madam," replied he, "I should be sorry to have lost what you are looking for." This is my little story. You allowed me to tell you one, and I have taken advantage of your permission. Yours amused me highly, and I was pleased with myself that it did; for it is necessary to have some degree of wit, to enter into the point of it.

It is strange that you should know so well the source of your disorder, and that you should not cure it. Think often, my dear madam, of the necessity of dying, and you will have less fear of death. It is by familiarising myself to the thought, that I have diminished the dread of it. In those who reject, and seldom dwell upon, this idea, it creates sadness; in me, it acts differently; it makes me follow the precept of Solomon, "To do good, and to rejoice," as a means to prolong life. Thus it is by the love of life, that I lose the fear of death. It is certain, that if I were to see you frequently, I should make you hear reason upon the subject, but, in the mean time, I should like to treat it often with you by letter. Do not fancy that it is your interest only that induces me to undertake your cure, it is my own also; and I, who love mirth, believe I should die, if you were to die, from having no one with whom I could laugh in the true spirit of laughing.

† The same who was beheaded for high treason.

LETTER CCCXLIX.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNTESS DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Sunday, Oct. 13, 1675.

You say very justly, my dear, that the dates contribute little to make the letters of those we love agreeable. Why should our attention be confined to public affairs? Your health, your family, your most trifling actions, your sentiments, it is these that interest me; and I am so well persuaded that you are of my way of thinking, that I make no scruple of talking to you of the Rocks, of mademoiselle du Plessis, of my walks, of my woods, of the affairs of our abbé, and of Copenhagen, when occasion offers. You may therefore firmly believe, that every thing that comes from you is of consequence to me, and that I am pleased to know every thing, even to your tapestry; and if you want a fresh supply of needles to work with, I can supply you with some admirable ones. I was employed yesterday on a piece of work as tedious as the company I had: I never work but when I have company; when I am alone, I walk, I read, or I write. La Plessis incommodes me no more than Maria; I am so happy as to have no inclination to listen to any thing she says, and find as little interruption from her presence, as you do from some whom you have the same kind of regard for. In other respects, she has the best sentiments in the world; I admire how all her good qualities are spoiled by her impertinent and ridiculous manners. It is quite laughable to hear what she says of my patience in bearing with her; how she explains it; and the obligations she fancies it lays her under to attach herself to me; and how I serve her for an excuse for not visiting her

friends at Vitré. It would make you smile, to observe her little arts to satisfy her vanity (for vanity is the growth of every soil); and her affected fears that I am growing jealous of a nun of Vitré, for whom she has a partiality. All this would make an excellent farce.

I must tell you the news of this province. M. de Chaulnes is at Rennes with a great number of troops. He has declared, that if the inhabitants offer to leave it, or to raise the least disturbance, he will take away the parliament from that city for ten years. The fear of this makes them bear with every thing: I have not yet heard how these warlike personages behave to the poor citizens. We expect madame de Chaulnes, who is coming to see the princess at Vitré: we are in safety under her protection; but I can assure you, that if I only were here, M. de Chaulnes would think it a pleasure to show his respect for me; this is the only circumstance in which I could answer for him. I beg you to be under no uneasiness; I am in safety here, as in a province which you say belongs to me.

I shall not thank d'Hacqueville for writing to you three times week, it would be laughing at him; the praises he merits upon that subject are far from my thoughts. He writes to me twice in the week; I shall abridge one of these by my own example, out of pure friendship for him, wishing to have very little part in the murder we are all committing on him: he will die, and then we shall be in despair: it would be an irreparable loss, and all the d'Hacquevilles in the world would not make amends for it; and he has given me great pleasure, by removing the resentment I felt for cardinal d'Estrées. He informs me that our cardinal has been refused in a full consistory on his own letter; and that, after this last ceremony, there is nothing more to fear: so that he is now, for the third time, a cardinal against

his will; at least for these two last times; for the first time, I believe, he was not much displeased. Write and rally him upon this happy disappointment: d'Hacqueville is transported, and I love him for it. I often receive notes from our dear cardinal, and write to him in return: I keep this little correspondence very secret and mysterious; it is the more dear to me.

You are not much afraid of Ruyter*. Ruyter is, however, the god of battles. Guitaut is unable to resist him: but, in reality, the king's star resists him. There never was so fixed a star: it dispersed the great fleet last year; killed M. de Lorraine; repulsed Montecuculi; and will make peace, through the marriage of prince Charles. I mentioned this last circumstance the other day to madame de Tarente; she told me that he was already married to the empress dowager; and that this marriage, though it has not been declared, would prevent the other. You will see that she will die, if her life occasions any inconvenience. You reason so well upon affairs of state, that it is easy to see you are become a politician in your government. I have written to the beautiful princess de Vaudemont; she is unhappy, and I am grieved for her, for she is very amiable. I dared not write to madame de l'Islebonne, but you have inspired me with courage. I fear little Coulanges is not with you; his wife has written to me sadly out of spirits; she is at Lyons, where she thinks she shall stay the winter: it is quite high treason in her opinion not to be at Paris: she tells me you have been very sociable together. La Trousse is at Paris, and at court, overwhelmed with caresses and praises: his way of receiving them is calculated to augment them. It is said that he will have Froulai's situation;

* Admiral of the Dutch fleet.

if it should be so, there will be a remove in that company, and I have desired our friend d'Hacqueville to pay a little attention to it, for the sake of our poor Guidon, who languishes in his little post. I have sent to him to come hither: I want to marry him to a little damsel, who is a Jewess by birth; but, in my opinion, money is always of a good family. This is a castle in the air; I depend on nothing, after having failed of mademoiselle d'Eubonne. Madame de Villars writes to me of fresh wonders performed by the chevalier de Grignan; I believe they are only the accounts of his former actions renewed: but he has really the best reputation that can be desired.

I must tell you a handsome proceeding of the attorney-general *. He had an estate, of the house of Bellièvre, which was legally made over to him, as a gift: but he returned it to the creditors. He said he could not accept such a present, when he considered that the creditors, who were honest men, would be injured by it. This is very heroical.

I dare not think of seeing you; when this hope sinks too deeply into my heart, and is so unlikely to be gratified, it does me too much harm. I remember still what I suffered during the illness of my poor aunt; and how soon the sight of you made me forget that grief: I have not yet a prospect of receiving so much joy. You assure me that you are extremely well; I pray God that your health may continue: I have this subject very much at heart. As for me, I am in perfect health: you would much approve my sobriety, the exercise I use, and my confining myself, like a Carmelite, to seven hours' sleep. This austere life pleases me; it resembles the barrenness of the country. I do not grow

* Achilles de Harlai, afterwards first president.

fat; and the air is so thick and so soft, that my complexion, which many have so long pretended to admire, is not yet changed. I wish you could pass an evening here; you would find it preferable to all the pommades you can use. I have ten workmen, who amuse me extremely. Rahuel and Pilois are each in their proper places. You ought to be convinced of my regard by the trifles with which I fill my letters. Since I complained in verse, of the rain, the weather has been delightful, and I therefore praise it in prose.

Our province is so much taken up with punishments, that there is no thought of visits; and, without pretending to haughtiness, I am very much pleased at it. Do you remember when we thought there was nothing so good in the country as disagreeable company, for the pleasure of seeing them depart? It is a pleasure I shall not have this year.

LETTER CCCL.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, Oct. 16, 1675.

No, my dear, I do not entertain too high an opinion of M. de Lavardin: I think him to be what he really is; I am neither charmed with his pleasantries, nor his manners; I see him in the same light I have always done; but I am so just as to give true merit its due, though it be mixed with some disagreeable qualities. It is to his good qualities that I am attached; and I think myself fortunate, in having expressed to you the same opinion of him at Paris; otherwise you might have suspected that I was influenced by the reception he gave me. In a word, I shall always wish those I love to have more charms; but I shall be satisfied, if

they have as many virtues. He has greater generosity and integrity than I have ever met with in a courtier; you would approve his manner of proceeding very much upon certain occasions, though you speak of him as you do. This I say, my dear, in my own justification, and you may impart it to the fat abbé, if ever by chance he has a pain in the calf of his legs* upon this subject. I am glad you have remarked, as well as I, the regularity of our letters, and the noble conduct of those obliging gentlemen who take charge of them, running with all their strength day and night that we may receive them the sooner: I tell you we are ungrateful to the post-boys, and even to M. de Louvois† who establishes them every where with so much diligence. But, ah! my dear child, we are still farther asunder, and all our admiration will cease: when I consider that, in your last letter, you only answer the one I wrote to you from Silleraye, and that I shall have been three weeks to-morrow at the Rocks, I find we were sufficiently distant before, without this new addition.

M. d'Hacqueville tells me, that to write once a week is sufficient for business, but not enough to satisfy his friendship; and that he would choose rather to add a letter than to retrench one. You may easily judge, that since the regulation I prescribed did not please him, I laid no restraint on his civilities, and left him the liberty of his writing-desk. Consider, that he writes with the same fury to all who are out of Paris, and visits every day all who remain there: this indefatigableness is in the true spirit of the d'Hacquevilles. You may apply yourself to them, my dear, with per-

* A familiar expression of the abbé de Pontcarré when he was weary of any particular subject of conversation.

† Superintendant-general of the post.

fect confidence; their hearts are capable of conquering every thing. I have no longer any thought of sparing him; I resolve to employ him without remorse. If I should make a scruple of fatiguing him to death, he will die in the service of some other, who will have less consideration for him. He loves only those by whom he is thus oppressed: let us then oppress him without mercy.

I wish you could see how beautiful these woods are at present. Madame de Tarente was here yesterday the whole day; the weather was perfectly fine; she talked much of you; she admires you more than my little friend *. Her daughter is ill; she was very melancholy on account of it. I led her to her coach at the end of the great avenue: she pressed me to retire, and told me I treated her with so much ceremony, that she believed I took her for a German: I replied, "Yes, madame, I certainly take you for a German †, I should sooner have obeyed your daughter-in-law ‡." She understood me like a French woman. Her birth, methinks, entitles her to respect from those who understand the world. She has a romantic style in every thing she relates, and I wonder that even those who love romances should be displeased with it: she expects madame de Chaulnes. M. de Chaulnes is at Rennes with Forbin, Vins, and four thousand men; it is thought there will be some hanging. M. de Chaulnes was received like a king, but as it is fear which has made them alter their tone, he does not forget the insults he received, of which the least and most familiar was *fat pig*, without calculating the stones thrown at his

* Madame de Grignan's miniature picture.

† Madame de Tarente was the daughter of William V. landgrave of Hesse-Cassel.

‡ Madeleine de Crequi, duchess de la Trémouille.

windows and into his garden, and the threats, which Providence alone seems to have prevented from being put into execution; it is these that are to be punished.

D'Hacqueville, with his own hand (for it is not in his letter of news, which may have been copied), acquaints me, that M. de Chaulnes arrived with his troops at Rennes on Saturday, October 12th. I thanked him for his care, and informed him, that M. de Pomponne was sitting for his picture to Mignard. But this is only to be mentioned amongst ourselves; for you know his temper is as delicate as his complexion. Your brother's letters on the subject of his ensigncy are full of the lamentations of Jeremiah; he says with justice, what we said when he purchased it, that he is still nine hundred leagues distant from the Cape; but some people put it into his head, that marrying you, would establish him; and this reason, which ought indeed to have produced a contrary effect with him, has made him so impatient, that he is now in despair: some hearts are strangely compounded. In short, my child, we may be assured that a subaltern situation is a miserable thing.

You know our cardinal continues a cardinal to all intents and purposes. We ought all to be delighted at this termination of the affair: degradation is not desirable. In the name of God, do not neglect to write to him: he likes my letters; judge whether he will not like yours. You did not tell me that the first president of Provence had beaten his wife. His manner of doing it delights me: it is gallant and new. "We all know our wives must be beaten sometimes," said a country fellow: but the flat of the sword is charming. I would lay any wager, that little d'Oppède is not dead: I know some who ought to be so.

It must be owned, that the good fortune of the French every where surpasses credibility. Our enemies do

every thing for us, without giving us the least trouble; they retire even when they see it is in their power to embarrass us. You will see what Ruyter will do in the Mediterranean: the prince of Orange is going to sleep, and I expect your brother. I will answer to you for this province, and even for peace: it seems to me to be so necessary, that it will make itself, in spite of those who oppose it. I shall follow your advice, my dear child, and live in the hope of seeing you again: I cannot begin too soon, to make up for the tears I have shed since our separation, as well as for the fear of not seeing you again.

I embrace M. de Grignan, for I conclude he is returned from the pursuit: tell me all your news, for you see I load you with mine. Saint-Geran has undertaken to write to me seriously on the embassy of madame de Villars, who, as she says, is going to Turin. I believe it is because there is only one female regent there: I answered her in the same style, but not without some difficulty. Have you not been thanked for your Queen of Hungary water? It is divine; for my part, I thank you still; I almost get tipsy with it every day: I carry it in my pocket; it is like snuff, when we are accustomed to it, we cannot do without it: it is an excellent remedy against lowness of spirits; I take it in the evening more to exhilarate me than to guard against the dew, from which my woods [illegible] you are too good in fearing the wolves, the [illegible] the chemists, should insult me. Adieu, my child; I love you with my whole heart, in every [illegible] of the words, without abating a little.

LETTER CCCLI.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, Oct. 20, 1675.

I CANNOT sufficiently admire the diligence and fidelity of the post. I received on the 18th, your letter of the 9th, that is, in nine days only after date; which is all that can be desired. But, my dear, we must soon put an end to our admirations; for, as you say, you are going still farther off, that we may both be exactly in the spot which Providence has assigned us. For my part, God knows, I acquit myself very ill in my residence; but you, heavens! M. d'Angers (H. Arnauld) cannot do more; when I think, however, of our separation, and how much I deserve to enjoy the pleasure of being with you, and of all your affection for me, and then reflect that we are placed at two different ends of the globe, you must excuse me if I cannot view this part of our history with gaiety of heart. Common sense opposes it, and my infinite love still more. I have nothing to do but take refuge in submission to the will of Providence. I am very glad you have seen M. de la Garde: he does me great honour in approving my turn of mind; he is a very good judge: I am sorry you are going to lose him so soon, for he is really a worthy man. Your conversations must have been endless. So he is to take the archbishop away to La Garde: it was very well said of him, that he was like a river which fertilised and made every country flourish through which it passed. I find he did wonders at Grignan.

M. de Chaulnes is at Rennes with four thousand men; he has removed the parliament to Vannes, which has occasioned a terrible desolation. The ruin of Rennes

brings with it that of the whole province. Madame de Marbeuf is at Vitré; she has brought me a thousand compliments from madame de Chaulnes, and from M. de Vins, who intends paying me a visit. I am not under the least apprehension about these troops on my own account: but I cannot help feeling for the despair and desolation our poor province suffers at present. It is supposed we shall not have any assembly of the states here, or if we have, it will be only to buy off the taxes which we gave two million five hundred thousand livres to have taken off only two years ago, and which have been all laid upon our shoulders again; and perhaps they may set a price too upon bringing the parliament back to Rennes. M. de Montmoron * is fled out of the town, to a seat belonging to one of his friends, at about three leagues' distance from hence, that he may avoid hearing the cries and lamentations of the people at seeing their dear parliament removed. You see I am quite a Breton, but you know it is owing to the air I breathe; and to something else, for every creature, without distinction, is in affliction throughout the province. Be under no concern about my health, my dearest child; I am extremely well. Madame de Tarente has given me an essence that has cured her of vapours that were worse than mine: two drops are to be taken for fifteen days following in any beverage that is drunk at table, and it cures effectually. She has told me circumstances of its efficacy which have all the air of those in the comedy of the Medecin Forcé; but I believe them all, and I would take some of the essence now if it were not that I think it a pity to make use of so admirable a remedy when I have no real occasion for it. I will send you some time or other the remainder of the prescription.

* He was a Sévigné, and dean of the parliament of Britany.

of the boat. You will make La Plessis too vain, for I shall tell her how much you love her; except what I told you the other day, I do not think a better creature exists: she is here every day. I have some of your excellent Hungary water in my pocket: I am quite in love with it; it cures all my sorrows: I wish I could send some of it to Rennes. My woods continue very beautiful still, and the verdure is a hundred times finer than that at Livri; I do not know whether this proceeds from the nature of the trees themselves, or from the refreshing rains we have here; but there is certainly no comparison; every thing here looks as green now as in the month of May: the leaves that fall are brown it is true, but those that remain on the trees are not at all faded: you never observed this beauty in them. As to that blessed tree that saved your life, I am often tempted to build a little chapel there: it seems to carry its head above all the rest, and exceeds them in bulk as well as stature, and with very good reason, for it saved you: I may, at least, repeat to it the stanza of Medor in Ariosto, in which he wishes happiness and peace to the cave that had given him so much pleasure. Our sentences are not at all disfigured, I visit them frequently; I think they are rather increased, and two trees that are close to each other, often present us with two contrary sentiments, *La lontananza ogni grand piaga salda**: and, *Piaga d'amor non si sana mai*†. There are five or six that contradictory. The good princess was charmed with them, as I am with the letter you have written our good abbé, on Jacob's journey to the land of promise, in your closet.

Madame de Lavardin has informed me of what is still

* Time is a cure for wounds, however deep.

† The wounds of love are never to be healed.

to be kept secret for a few days longer, that d'Olonne is going to marry his brother to mademoiselle de Noirmoutier. He gives him all his lands in Poitou, besides a great quantity of jewels and furniture. They are all at La Ferté-Milon, where this curious affair is to be made up. I never thought d'Olonne would have given himself any concern about his name or family.

LETTER CCCLII.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, Oct. 23, 1675.

I RECEIVED your letter, my dear, just as I was going to Vitré. What you say relating to the princess is so natural, so seasonable, so exactly what I wished, that I thank you for it a thousand times. I read to madame de Tarente that part of your letter that relates to her, and she is delighted with it. Her daughter is ill, but not so ill but that she still receives letters from her, but they are all in an unfinished style, full of *dear mammas*, and childish expressions of affection, though she is twenty years old. Both her lovers are in the field.

Madame writes madame de Tarente very long letters in German, which I get her to explain to me. Her highness writes to her with great tenderness and kindness, and expresses a strong desire to have her with her. I have a notion that madame de Maugiron would have reason to be afraid of our princess, if she were a catholic, for her place would suit the future admiralty; and Madame declares that she shall never be happy till she has her about her. Madame de Monaco was one day a little hard upon the good Tarente; when Madame, notwithstanding the great seeming regard she has for her, appeared displeased, and immediately silenced her.

Madame de Chaulnes is to come to Vitré to pay a visit to the princess, and I shall there have an opportunity of paying my respects to my lady governess, and the little personage *, which will save me a great deal of trouble. Madame de Marbeuf has been with me for a day; she professes great esteem for me; she has really many excellent qualities, and a heart that is noble and sincere. She has been an eye-witness to all the disturbances in our province, and acts some of them to the life. There are circumstances that would make you die with laughing, and that you would hardly credit; but some day or other when we are together, they will serve admirably to pass away an hour or two. She is going to Digne for the rheumatism; she will call to see you; pray receive her as one of my friends. D'Hacqueville assures me that during the time of your assembly he will take care to furnish you with news. I have returned him many thanks for his care. He tells me that our parliament is removed, and that M. de Chaulnes is at Rennes with a number of troops, and all this with *his own hand* †.

Our cardinal is not only *recardinalised*, but has had an order at the same time from his holiness, to leave his retreat at St. Michael, and return to Commerci, where he now is; I fancy he will live very retired there, and leave off all state and house-keeping. So now he is just what we always wished him to be. In my opinion his holiness has acted very properly throughout this affair. The letter from the consistory is a perfect panegyric: I should be unwilling to die without once more embracing his dear eminence. You should by all means

* Mademoiselle de Murinais, afterwards madame de Karman.

† He was so fond of writing, and of being thought a man of intelligence, that he even informed madame de Sévigné of things that passed on the very spot where she was.

write to him, and not forsake him under the false notion of his being in the third region. One can never be so abstracted as not to be pleased with marks of remembrance from those we love.

You are afraid, my child, that the wolves should eat me; that must be when they can get nothing else; they might perhaps make a pretty good meal of my little person, but I am so surrounded by my infantry, that I fear nothing. Beaulieu * desires you will believe that he intends to make his court to you, by the care he takes of *mamma*. His wife is not brought to bed yet; those creatures never know how to reckon. You desire me, my dearest, to leave you within doors sometimes, when I take my walks; but indeed I will not, for I should then make my walks too short, so I am resolved to take you with me, even though I expose you to the dews a little; the dews here are not dangerous, they will do your complexion as much good as a cosmetic.

I cannot set about distinguishing the rights of the *other* †; I am persuaded they are very extensive, but when we love to a certain degree, and our whole heart is filled with that passion, I think it is very difficult to make so nice a distinction; but in this respect, every one acts as he pleases, or as he can. I do not find that we have always the power of regulating the sentiments in this case; happy are they, who have the appearance of reason on their side. At all events, I am persuaded, that you will prevent my becoming ridiculous; and on my side, I endeavour to govern myself as prudently as I can, and to be troublesome to no one. This is all I know of the matter.

* A valet of madame de Sévigné.

† Madame de Sévigné is speaking here of the rights of love and friendship, and by the word *other*, she means love.

Madame de Tarente has made me a present of the prettiest little dog in the world; it is a spaniel, and has all the beauty, good nature, and agreeable little tricks imaginable, but it does not attach itself to me; I am easy, however, about that, for I can despise those, who have despised poor *Marphise*. It is very amusing to see the little creature running before me, hunting up and down the alleys.

The archbishop of Arles has informed us of the excellent order in which he has put your affairs; God be praised, and may He watch over them for the time to come. He mentions likewise, the marriage of mademoiselle de Grignan, which I greatly approve: this affair should by no means be neglected. Employ d'Hacqueville in it, during the absence of the coadjutor; he is an excellent creature, to conquer delays of all kinds, by his indefatigableness, and assiduity; you want such a head as his, to carry the matter on properly with M. de Montausier; it is one of the things in which d'Hacqueville is unrivalled.

I thought I had been too rude in refusing madame de Fontevraud * the picture; for as every one is ready to offer himself up there soul and body, I thought it showed very little of the courtier, or indeed of politeness, in me, not to do like the rest; but you do not blame me, and I am content. Have I mentioned to you a rude speech of *Quanto's* friend (the king) to M. de Rochefoucault's son (Marsillac)? I have it from good authority. The subject of conversation was vapours. The son said they arose from a certain charcoal, which was very evident upon seeing a fountain mended. The friend said aloud to Quanto: "My God! how hateful are persons who wish to reason upon every thing! For my

* Sister to madame de Montespan.

part, I think nothing so silly." As this style is unusual, every body was surprised at it, and knew not what to do; but it was repaired by a thousand courtesies, and no more was thought of it. What strange things vapours are! Adieu, my dearest child; I will not say any more about my love for you, but say something about yours to me, and about all that concerns you. Madame d'Escars is at Poitou with her daughter; happy woman!

There is a person in this country, who writes a great many letters, and for fear he should mistake one for the other, he always takes care to direct the outside before he writes the letter. This whim diverted me exceedingly *.

LETTER CCCLIII.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, Oct. 27, 1675.

I HAVE had no letters from you, my dear, lovely child, which makes me very melancholy: it never enters into my head, that it is by any fault of yours; I know your attention, and impute it all to the confusion you are in at leaving Grignan. Madame de Chaulnes, and the little person, have been to Vitré to see the princess of Tarente. She first sent her compliments to me, informing me she would wait upon me; I dined there the next day. She received me with great joy, and entertained me two full hours with affection and eagerness, giving me an account of their conduct for these six months past, how much she had suffered, and what dan-

* This man is the abbé de Coulanges, whom she does not name, apparently thinking that this circumspection will render her little malice more pardonable.

ger she had run: she knows that I have an extensive correspondence, and might possibly have heard things differently represented. I thanked her for the honour she did me, in this mark of her confidence. In short, the province has been very much to blame: but it is severely punished, and, perhaps, may never be able to recover itself again. There are five thousand troops at Rennes, half of which are to pass the winter there, which will be long enough to get *little ones* *, as marshal de Grammont said. Forbin, and Vins, are heartily tired of their employment †. The latter sent me his compliments, and I suppose I shall see him here. They are to return in a fortnight, but their troops are to remain behind. Twenty or thirty persons are apprehended already, and will be hanged. The parliament is removed, that is the finishing stroke: for without it, Rennes is not of so much consequence as Vitré. Madame de Tarente has saved us from the contributions: I will not say all that M. de Chaulnes has written to me, but were I governess of the province, I could not be more secure of the care he will take of Sévigné, which, you know, lies just at the gates of Rennes. I went to sleep at the Tower ‡, and by eight o'clock this morning, I had the good princess, and the duchess, at my levee. M. de St. Malo was with us at Vitré; he is almoner to madame de Chaulnes.

I was perfectly rejoiced to return here; I am making a new walk, which employs me wholly. I pay my workmen in corn; and find nothing so profitable as to amuse one's self, and forget, if possible, the evils of life. Neither do my evenings, my child, about which you are so much in pain, hang more heavily on my hands:

* See Letter of 19th August, 1675.

† They were sent at the head of the soldiery to chastise the province.

‡ The Tower of Sévigné, the old family-seat.

I am almost always writing, or reading, and midnight overtakes me before I know where I am. Our abbé takes his leave of me at ten, and the two hours that I am alone, are no more irksome to me than the rest. In the day, I am either employed with the abbé, or among my dear labourers, or in my favourite work. In short, my dear, life flies away so swiftly, and we are always drawing so near our end, that I cannot conceive how people can make themselves so unhappy about worldly affairs. I have here sufficient time for reflection, and it is my fault, and not that of the place, if I do not indulge it. I am quite well; all my people obey you admirably: they are ridiculously careful of me; they come to guard me home in the evening armed cap-a-pee, and it is against a squirrel they draw their swords.

I have received an admirable letter from the coadjutor: he complains heavily of your raillery, and begs me very earnestly to revenge him, assuring me, that if I abandon him, God will not. He has sent me his speech, which loses nothing by being in print; it is a finished performance; he has likewise sent me the letter you wrote him upon it, which is very pointed, and full of wit; there are strokes in it that are admirably suited to him, than whom, no one understands raillery better. Well, he is fallen into good hands: I cannot sufficiently love him for sending me that letter; it is of double value to me just now, that I have none from you myself: I had a great mind to have written you the very same thing you say to him, I mean about your bishops: you must have seen that I thought the same.

I am impatient to hear from you: I am sensible of the vexation it gave you to be obliged to quit your country-house, your liberty, and your tranquillity. The ceremonial code, is a book you are not very fond of studying. Adieu, my love: I am wholly yours, and

embrace you with all my heart. If M. de Grignan has time to come for it, I will give him an embrace too. The good behaviour, and peaceable disposition, of your province, have for ever given the lie to the rules of physiognomy.

They tell me, there is great talk of peace: I wish it may prove so; I fancy it would be better for all parties: we wished for war too; we are always uneasy, and shifting from side to side, in hopes to find out a good place at last.

LETTER CCCLIV.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, Oct. 30, 1675.

Good heavens! my dear child, can any thing be more entertaining than your letter from Aix? Let me desire you to read your letters over before you send them, that the pleasure you will have in the perusal, may make you amends for the trouble you have been at, in writing them. So you have kissed all Provence? there would be no great pleasure, I assure you, in kissing all Britany, unless you loved the smell of wine. You have been very particular in the cares, caresses, and distinctions, you bestowed on the good baroness; you know in what light I have always considered her; I should certainly have advised you to make use of the diminishing end of your telescope with her. You do not mention Roquesante, nor the good cardinal *; I am so attached to ours at Commerci †, that for his sake I love all red hats that are worthily worn; but hold, and ever shall hold, my-

* Cardinal Grimaldi, archbishop of Aix.

† Cardinal de Retz, who had retired to Commerci.

self offended with all others: what you say on that subject, is very just.

M. de Marseille * has been described to us, armed cap-a-pee, with his sword in his hand, by the side of the king of Poland, having had two horses killed under him, and pursuing the Tartars, as archbishop Turpin did the Saracens: in his present situation, I fancy he would most sovereignly despise the little assembly at Lambese. Will you have some news of Rennes? A tax of 100,000 crowns is laid upon the citizens, which if they do not raise within four and twenty hours, it is to be doubled, and then raised by military execution. The inhabitants of a whole street have been turned out of their houses, and banished; with express orders, that no one shall presume to entertain them in their houses, under pain of death; so that you might see these poor wretches, men, women, and children, old and young, some of the women having just laid in, all wandering about the out-skirts of the town, without a morsel to eat, or a bed to lie upon. The day before yesterday, a musician was broken upon the wheel, and his quarters stuck up in four different parts of the town, like those of Jossoran † at Aix; for having been the first that promoted the plundering the stamp-office. At his death, he declared it was the farmers of the stamp revenue that had set him on to stir up the rest, and that they had given him twenty-five crowns for the purpose; he persisted in this to the last, but they could get nothing else out of him. Sixty of the citizens are already in custody, and to-morrow the execution is to begin. This province has set a fine example to the rest, particularly to be

* Then ambassador in Poland.

† A villain who had murdered his master, a gentleman of Provence, of the family of Pontevez.

careful of paying proper respect to their governors, and governors' wives, and not presume to throw stones into their garden. I told you how madame de Tarente had protected us all here. She was with me yesterday in my woods; it was a delightful day: she has laid aside all ceremony now, and comes and goes like one of the family. She showed me letters from Denmark. The favourite has all the letters of the princess brought, as if by mistake, to the army, that he may have an excuse to enclose them to her, with a line or two from himself in favour of his passion.

But to return to Britany: every village is to furnish its quota towards maintaining the soldiers; now we give our provisions to save our bread; formerly we used to carry them to market, and get money for them, but that fashion is entirely changed. M. de Molac is returned to Nantes; M. de Lavardin is coming to Rennes. Every body pities poor M. d'Harouïs*; we cannot conceive how he will manage, nor what demands will be made upon the state, supposing they should be assembled: in short, you may now reckon that there is no longer such a province as Britany, which is a pity. My son is very much alarmed that the chevalier de Lauzun should be permitted to resign his commission: we have written to M. de la Trousse, who will speak to M. de Louvois, that our poor ensign may rise without exposure; we shall see what will be the effect. D'Hacqueville will be able to tell you more than I can: I have one consolation, however, that there is a wide difference between having a commission to sell, and having a purchaser for it. The time is past when six years ago I gave M. de Louvois twenty-five thousand crowns, a month sooner than I had promised it him: we could

* Treasurer-general of the states of Britany.

not now find ten thousand francs in the whole province. They do messieurs de Forbin and de Vins the honour to say, that they are heartily weary of being here, and grow very impatient to be gone. I think I told you of the pretty match between mademoiselle de Noirmoutier, and the brother of d'Olonne. What Monceau has done for M. de Turenne is very fine: I do not much like the word *amongst* in such a trifling work.

LETTER CCCLV.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, Nov. 8, 1675.

I AM wholly occupied with your affairs in Provence; and if you take an interest in those of Denmark, I take a much greater in what passes at Lambesc. I wait for the issue of the defence that is to be made in parliament, to be sent to the guildhall: I wait for the nomination of an attorney of the province, and the success of the journey of your consul, who would fain be a noble by the king's order. I have been highly diverted with your first president, and the effects of his jealousy; and cannot help thinking that they did him great injustice to suppose, that a person brought up at Paris, should not know better how to behave himself; and would not rather give two or three boxes on the ear, than as many blows with the flat of a sword: I am surprised that he could be jealous of a boy who smelt of tobacco; but there is no figure that is not formidable in some eyes. I am thinking, that our wine-smelling Bretons would be very good matches for your tobacco-scented Provençals.

I always wonder how a man can make a speech in public without faltering, or missing some part, when

the eyes of a whole assembly are upon him, and a profound silence observed while he is speaking. This is for you, M. le Comte: I am heartily rejoiced to find you possess a boldness superior to any thing to which I could ever pretend: but after all, my dear child, it is so much time lost, to speak so long, and so ably, when there is nobody to hear. I am as angry as you can be, that neither the bishop nor the intendant was present at the opening of the assembly. I think there cannot be more unbecoming conduct, nor a greater affront put upon the king, and the person who has the honour to represent him. If they wait till M. de Marseille returns from his embassy, they may wait a long time; for there is no great likelihood of his making one amongst them. I have complained of it to d'Hacqueville; that is all I can do at this distance, and all that can be done this year: shall you not mention it to madame de Vins? She has written me a very sprightly and pretty letter, complaining of my silence: she is jealous of my writing to others; she is determined to undeceive M. de Pomponne with respect to my love for him: she knows not what she will not do; I never saw such a little bundle of thorns. I have answered her letter, saying I rejoiced to find she was growing affectionate, and talking of jealousy without any interlineations: I did not think she could write so well; she talks much of you, and attacks me with great humour.

M. Boucherat, and M. de Harlai his son-in-law, dined with me on All-Saints' day. They are going to our states, which are to be opened when every one is assembled: they repeated the speech to me, it is a very good one: the presence of M. Boucherat will be of great service to this province, and likewise to M. d'Harouis. M. and madame de Chaulnes are no longer at Rennes: the punishments begin to slacken a little, and they have

done hanging, for want of people to hang: there are but two thousand soldiers remaining at Rennes. I fancy Forbin and Vins will return by way of Nantes: Molac is gone already. It was M. de Pomponne who protected that poor wretch I mentioned to you. If you will send me the romance of your first president, I will, in return, send you the lamentable ditty of the poor fiddler who was broken on the wheel at Rennes. M. Boucherat drinks your health; he is a very agreeable and sensible man: he came through Veret. At Blois he saw madame de Maintenon, and the duke de Maine, who is able to walk again: this has occasioned great joy. Madame de Montespan went to meet the dear little prince, and with her the abbess de Fontevraud, and madame de Thianges. I am in hopes this happy excursion will contribute to reconcile the two friends again.

You give me great pleasure, my dearest child, by taking so much care of my grand-daughter. I am convinced of the readiness with which you endeavour in every instance to oblige me. I know not why you should say that absence disturbs the order of love; the only evil I find it occasions, is the pain it makes us endure: I am quite ignorant of the charms of inconstancy, and I think I can answer for myself, and for every heart over which you extend your empire, that there is not one which does not pay you the same allegiance as when you left it. Is it not very generous of me to undertake thus to answer for the hearts of others? of mine, at least, there can be no doubt. I fancy you are not so much infatuated with your son as you used to be; I think the fault is yours, for he has too much sense not to be always handsome: you do not yet understand thoroughly the force of maternal love; so much the better, my child, it is violent; but without such reasons

as mine, which are not often to be found, this excess may be admirably dispensed with. When I am at Paris, we will talk of seeing each other again: the desire and hope of this are the support of my existence.

Adieu, my ever dear child; I should be delighted as well as you, if we could ally ourselves with the Maccabees; but that does not seem to go on well: I hope your reading goes on better; it would be a stain you could never wash out, were you to leave Josephus * unfinished: alas! did you know what I am finishing, and how much I suffer from the style of the Jesuit †, you would pity me; but you are truly happy to have so charming a book ‡.

LETTER CCCLVI.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, Nov. 6, 1675.

What a delightful letter have you written to me, my dear child! what thanks do I not owe you, for employing your hand, your eyes, your head, your time, in composing so agreeable a volume! I have read it over and over, and shall read it again with pleasure and attention. I can read nothing that is more interesting; you satisfy my curiosity in every thing I wish; I admire your care in giving me such punctual answers. This makes a conversation perfect, regular, and extremely entertaining. But I must beg you not to destroy yourself; this fear makes me renounce the pleasure of having frequently such entertainments: you cannot

* Author of the Jewish Antiquities.

† Maimbourg.

‡ History of the Jews, translated by M. Arnauld d'Andilli.

doubt my generosity in sparing you the fatigue of immoderate writing.

I comprehend with pleasure the high esteem that is paid to M. de Grignan in Provence, after what I have seen of it. This is a pleasure you are scarcely sensible of; you are too much accustomed to be loved and honoured in a province where you command. If you saw the horror, the detestation, the hatred, that the people have here for their governor, you would feel more than you do the pleasure of being adored every where. What affronts! what injuries! what menaces! what reproaches! the very stones fly round him. I do not believe M. de Grignan would accept this post upon such conditions.

You mention to me the paper you have signed so heroically in favour of M. de Grignan *. You say you had no doubt which way the honourable sentiments of cardinal de Retz † inclined: I do not say any thing of mine; it was enough that you could discern what his counsels tended to. In certain delicate affairs, we do not presume directly to advise, but we represent the case; the common friends of both do what is proper, that there may be no jarring opposition in the interest of those they love: but with a soul so perfectly generous and good as yours, we consult only ourselves, and act precisely as you have done. Have you not seen how much you have been admired? Are you not pleased that you owe to none but yourself so noble a resolution? You would have done nothing blameable, if you had refused to sign; you would only have acted like the rest of the world; but by consenting to it, you have exceeded all the world. In a word, my child, enjoy the

* It appears that madame de Grignan had entered into a bond for her husband.

† Cardinal de Retz advised her not to sign.

beauty of your own action, and do not think meanly of us for not having prompted you to it: on a similar occasion, we should perhaps have acted as you have done, and you would have advised as we did; it is all well. I am very much pleased that M. de Grignan is so good as to recompense this mark of your friendship and affection by a greater attention to his affairs: the prudence you commend him for, is the truest mark of his gratitude you could have wished.

TO MONSIEUR DE GRIGNAN.

Count, I am delighted to hear my daughter is satisfied with you: allow me to thank you by reason of the great interest I take in your affairs, and which I entreat you to preserve. You cannot fail of this without ingratitude, and without doing injustice to the blood of the Adhémars. I have read, in the Crusades, of one of these who was an illustrious personage six hundred years ago. He was beloved as you are, and would never have given a moment's uneasiness to such a wife as yours. His death was lamented by an army of three hundred thousand men, and mourned by all the princes in Christendom. Not many pages after, I find a castellane, not altogether so ancient: he is indeed a mere modern; it was but five hundred and twenty years since he made a great figure. I conjure you, therefore, by these two noble ancestors, who are my particular friends, to be guided by madame de Grignan, and consider how much you will consult your own interest in doing so.

TO MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

You see, my child, that without intending it, or thinking of it, I have written a long letter to M. de Grignan.

Your confidence with the intendant upon the two houses who make so much noise at M. L***'s is very amusing. I love to attack, on all occasions like this, certain persons who think themselves of so much consequence that we dare not approach them. We need only take courage; their menaces are like the false fires of the magician in Tasso. In my opinion, lying so palpably in a known matter of fact like this, is tendering false money, like Pomenars.

If I were to write from this time till to-morrow, I should not be able to tell you, how much your episode of Messina* has amused me. This piece is an original: the prince and minister are both admirable characters. But what, then, is become of the valour Messina boasted of in his youth? He appears to me at present like the count de Culagna in the *Secchia rapita*†: or like the figure of Sleep in Ariosto, or that of Indolence as it is painted by Despreaux in the Lutrin: but it is not possible for him to remain long in this state. I shall preserve your portrait of him very carefully: it could not have been more excellently done by Mignard.

I follow your example with respect to madame de Jariet. I wish to remember nothing but her kindness, her attachment to you, and the tears we have shed together. I beg you to embrace her for me, and to let me know if my remembrance gives her any pleasure. I should be very glad to hear that the marriage of our daughter was likely to be effected. If you have no friend near M. de Montausier, employ d'Hacqueville in it. He may as well be killed wholly, as partially. I had

* Messina had revolted against the Spaniards with the assistance of the French. M. de Valavoir had, in the sight of a Spanish fleet which remained inactive, brought them a supply of corn and of troops.

† A mock-heroic poem in Italian, which is thought to have given the first hint to the Lutrin of Boileau.

designed to have spared him a little; but I have fallen on him afresh, and do him more mischief than all the rest of his friends. Let me advise you to deal with him like me; he is an inexhaustible friend. Since you do not pity me though I am surrounded with troops, and doubt that my confidence is founded upon my safety, you will pity me, when you hear that there are two thousand five hundred men less in Rennes; that is very cruel, after having had five thousand: there are some passages in your letters that are quite luminous.

The good cardinal, as you know, is at Commerci since his brief; I suppose he will live in the same retirement there: but it seems to me that vespers do not accord well with a castle. I should think also, he liked to take medicine as well at Saint Michael, as not to take it. He was not so docile at Paris. You, my child, are still the same in this respect: you think vespers darker than ever: do you remember the follies of my son?

You are always very wicked when you speak of madame de la Fayette: I shall send her some trifling remembrances on your part: she often writes to me with her own hand, but it is true, they are only notes; for she has a pain in her side, which you know she used to have, that is very dangerous; she never leaves her room, and has not been a single day at Saint Maur: judge in what a weak state she must be. M. de la Rochefoucault has the gout; if, notwithstanding a milk diet, the gout takes this liberty with him every year, it will be a great affliction. Madame de Coulanges is returning to Paris; she has been long enough confined with her unreasonable mother. M. de Coulanges is much obliged to you for your reproaches: he would have come to see you, if he had been able. He saw the poor Rochebonne in the most gloomy abode in all

France: I very much pity her. Why cannot she go to Lyons? Madame de Verneuil was there in November; madame de Coulanges, cardinal de Bonzi, and Briole, were with her: was it not Paris? Briole owes all his good fortune to his good looks: he is a lucky fellow, and we lose every thing.

I am glad you like Josephus, Herod, and Aristobulus. I beg you to go on, and see the end of the siege of Jerusalem, and the fate of Josaphat. Take courage; every thing is beautiful in this historian, every thing is grand, every thing is magnificent, every thing is worthy of you; let not an idle fancy prevail with you to lay him aside. I am in the History of France; that of the Crusades has occasioned my looking into it, but it is not to be compared to a single leaf of Josephus. Alas! with what pleasure we weep over the misfortunes of Aristobulus and Mariamne!

Why, my dear, do you tell me that I shall finish the reading of the voluminous epistle you have sent me with yawning out,

Ah, que les grands parleurs sont par moi detestés*!

There are in your book, as you are pleased to term your letter, a thousand entertaining histories and episodes; and I have spent two hours in writing mere nothings to you. I have, in a word, the rage of talking myself out of breath, like the doctor in the Italian comedy. However, I conclude, and embrace you with extreme tenderness. I am perfectly well, the evenings are long, and it rains: this is all I have to inform you of.

M. de Tulle† has surpassed our expectations, in his funeral oration on M. de Turenne: it is a piece worthy of immortality.

* How much I detest great talkers!
† M. Mascaron, bishop of Tulle.

LETTER CCCLVII.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, Nov. 10, 1675.

I AM grieved, my child, that I have received no letter from you by this post; and I find by this little vexation, how great a comfort it is to hear from a person we truly love. It seems to bring us nearer to each other; we are entertained with a thousand thoughts it presents to the mind; and though they are sometimes mingled with grief, yet even this is preferable to ignorance.

We have a little St. Martin's summer, cold, but pleasant, which I like better than continual rains. I live always out of doors, like a wild beast. The vivacity of my humour depends so much on the weather, that if you would know the temper of mind I am in, you need only consult the stars. But Provence will always tell you wonders; fine weather is no novelty to you; you are too much accustomed to it: while we, who seldom see the sun in his full lustre, are in raptures, when we feel his kindly influence. Many fine reflections might have been made on this subject; but this is enough of rain and sunshine.

M. de Vins has been for a month at Rennes, saying every day he should come to see me, that he was a friend of mine, and related to the Grignans. M. and madame de Chaulnes, madame de Marbeuf, Tonquedec, and Coëtlogon, talked to him of me, and of my beautiful walks: he joined them, but it was great cry and little wool, for he passed through Guerche, which is only three leagues from hence, without coming near me; I would have laid a wager that he would not come: my

child, there are some that go, and some that stay. Forbin and he have smitten the hearts of two ladies at Rennes, sisters: these loves are very constant: the flowers of our fields are not more transient, but no season of love must be lost.

Madame de Lavardin sends me the news she receives from Paris: this is pleasant to me: her correspondents are, the marchioness d'Uxelles, the abbé de la Victoire, Longueil, and some others. No surprise could have been more agreeable than the one that was prepared for the king: he did not expect M. du Maine till the next day: he saw him walk into his apartment supported only by the hand of madame de Maintenon, who led him; it was a transport of joy. M. de Louvois went to see the governess on her arrival: she supped at madame de Richelieu's; some kissed her hand, others her gown, but she must have laughed at them all in her sleeve, if she is not very much changed, which it is said she really is. Madame de Coulanges is to return: I never doubted this. Nothing is talked of but M. de Tulle's admirable funeral oration: there is but one opinion respecting it. His text was: "O Lord, thou hast searched and known me;" which he treated most divinely. I have a great desire to see it in print.

This, my dear child, is what may be called chat, for I cannot pretend to furnish you with news at a thousand leagues' distance. Some correspondence is very entertaining. I advise you to ask M. de Coulanges to send you, in my absence, some trifles, that are often as interesting as public affairs. They say it is not true that M. de Bailleul is selling his commission. I suppose you will say of this as you did of M. de Champlatreux's mouth, which approached rather too near his eye, "Is it not as well there as any where else?" Is it true that the army of Catalogne is going to punish

Bourdeaux in the same way that Rennes has been punished? I have no faith in Ruyter: it is vain for you to tell me he is in the Mediterranean; it is a dream. Was not the same thing said last year? and you know it was not true. My son believes M. de Louvois will continue his kind distinctions to him, in making him purchase the colours, in order to rise; this is worse than the nine hundred leagues, but what is to be done? This pretty circumstance makes his return uncertain.

LETTER CCCLVIII.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, Nov. 19, 1675.

Here they are both, my dear; and I suppose I should have received them in due time, had it not been that the post stopped a day at Versailles. Whatever taste you may have for my letters, they can never be to you what yours are to me; and since it has pleased Heaven, that they are the only comfort I have left, I think myself very happy in thus admiring them: but indeed, my child, it is very painful to see so long a continuance of them, without the hopes of enjoying the company of one so dear to me as the writer is. I can scarcely reconcile myself to this hardship; all my thoughts, all my reflections, are darkened by it, and it requires a courage to which I have no pretension, to bear so extraordinary a fate. I regret every day that passes, and hurries me along without giving me time to be with you. I regret my life; and feel that I shall resign it with less sorrow, since all its arrangements are disagreeable to me. These thoughts, my dear, make me weep oftener than I tell you, and I shall deserve your sermons in spite of myself, and more frequently than I

wish, for I never willingly give way to these melancholy reflections, but they take possession of my heart without my being able to resist them. I am very angry with myself, my child, for not having been sufficiently mistress of this lively sentiment to-day; I am not accustomed to yield to it. But let us call another subject: it is one of my sad amusements, to compare this year with the last: what a difference! what delightful society did I then enjoy in the evenings! what happiness to see you, to meet you, to converse with you at all times! how agreeably was my affection requited! Of these happy days nothing escapes me, except the days themselves, which, too truly, are passed. I have not, however, the grief of not having felt my happiness: this is a reproach I can never make to myself; but for this reason I feel the contrast more severely.

You do not tell me, whether you have been sufficiently well treated in your assembly, to be quit to the king for the usual gift: ours is increased; I thought I should have beaten the honest Boucherat when I saw the augmentation. I do not see how we are to pay the half of it. The states are to open to-morrow at Dinan. The poor parliament are all sick at Vannes. Rennes is like a desert; the punishments and taxes are unmerciful: I might write from this time till to-morrow, were I to repeat the tragic stories I hear. La Marbeuf will not return again; she has settled her affairs, and is going to reside at Paris. I was thinking mademoiselle de Méri would do very well to take a house with her; she is a sensible woman, has an excellent carriage, and, what will make it still more convenient, they need be together only when they choose it themselves. I know she will be glad of an opportunity to oblige me, and be in a place where she can see me now and then; between this and Easter, mademoiselle

de Méri is to ask M. d'Effiat for an apartment. I have given La Troche a hint of all these things.

I often find, my dear, that I answer you, like Trivelin, in advance, upon the subjects of my health and M. de Vins: you have not, therefore, to wait three weeks. It is a reflection worthy of remark, that, with all our wonderings it is only nine days, from the third to the eleventh, that our letters are upon the road; but it is three weeks before we can say, *I am very well, I thank you.*

You are surprised at my having a little dog; the history is this. One day I was calling a little dog that belongs to a lady, who lives at the end of my park; madame de Tarente said, "What! are you fond of dogs? I will send you one of the prettiest creatures that ever was seen." I thanked her, but told her that I had made a resolution never again to indulge myself in a folly of that kind: so the subject was dropped, and I thought no more of it. A few days after, I saw a footman bringing a little dog-house in his arms, decorated with ribbons, and out of this house jumped a little sylph-like dog, all perfumed, of uncommon beauty, with fine large ears, breath as sweet as a rose, and a coat white as snow, and soft as silk. I never was more surprised; I would have returned it, but the servant would not take it back: the poor chamber-maid who had brought it up, was, it seems, ready to die with grief for the loss of it. It is Maria* who is so fond of the little dog; he sleeps in his house, or in Beaulieu's room, and eats nothing but bread. I do not give way to my fondness for it, but it begins to love and make much of me, and I am afraid of yielding at last. This is the history, with which I desire you will not acquaint Marphise †.

* One of madame de Sévigné's women.

† A favourite dog of madame de Sévigné's.

for I dread her reproaches: but it is the cleanliest little animal you ever beheld; its name is Fidele, a name I am afraid the lovers of the princess never merited, though they have been of some consequence too. I will amuse you some day or other with the relation of her adventures. Her style, it is true, is full of faintings and romance, and I do not think she has had sufficient leisure to love her daughter, at least, in the degree I love mine. More than one heart would be necessary to love so many things at once, and I daily perceive that the great fish devour the little ones. If you are, as you say, my preservative, I am very much obliged to you, and I cannot too highly prize my affection for you. I know not from what dangers it may have guarded me, but if it were from fire and water, it could not be dearer to me than it is. There are times when I wonder at persons wishing it to be supposed that they ever approached within nine hundred leagues of a cape. The good princess, however, makes her boast of it, to the great affront of her looking-glass, which daily informs her, that with such a face, she ought to have lost even the remembrance. She loves me extremely: I should not value her acquaintance at Paris, but here, among peasants, it adds to my consequence. Her horses are ill; she cannot come to the Rocks, and I do not accustom her to receive my visits oftener than once in a week or ten days: I say to myself, as M. de Bouillon said to his wife: "If I wished to pay my respects in a carriage, and to leave the Rocks, I should go to Paris."

Our Saint Martin's summer still continues, and I walk a great deal: as I am not acquainted with the use of an elbow-chair, I repose *mia corporea salma* in my avenues, where I spend whole days attended only by one footman, and do not return till almost night, when

fire and candles make my room cheerful: I hate twilight when I have nobody to chat with; and I had rather be alone in the woods, than alone in a room. This is like plunging up to the neck in water to save one's self from the rain: but any thing rather than an arm-chair. Do not, however, fear the dew, my child; there is none in these walks, which are like galleries; fear nothing but heavy rains, from which I must retire, and I can do nothing which does not injure my eyes: it is to preserve my sight I encounter what you call the dew; my health is very good, be not uneasy about it.

Let me thank you for liking Josephus; is it not the best history in the world? I send you by Ripert the third part of the Moral Essays, which I think admirable; you will call it the second, but the second is on the education of a prince; this is the third. There is likewise a treatise on self-knowledge which will please you, and another on the use that may be made of bad sermons; which would have been of great service to you on All-Saints' day. You do very well, my dear child, not to forget your Italian: like you, I read a little now and then by way of practice.

What you say respecting M. de Chaulnes is admirable. A man was yesterday broke alive upon the wheel at Rennes (this is the tenth), who confessed his intention to assassinate the governor: this wretch deserved to die. The physicians of this country are not so complaisant as those of Provence, who acknowledge, out of respect to M. de Grignan, that he has the fever; ours think nothing of the purple fever, with which M. de Chaulnes is really suffering, nor can they be prevailed upon to declare him in danger. When the parliament was banished, it was proposed, that they should purchase their return, by building a citadel at Rennes; but that illustrious assembly proudly refused the offer, made a

merit of obeying his majesty's commands instantly, and withdrew themselves with more precipitation than was desired; for had they staid, the time would have been wasted in fruitless negotiations, and they considered the remedy as worse than the disease.

Our cardinal is still at Commerci; the pope does not leave him at liberty to follow his own inclination. Is the intendant's lady with you? You will say, Yes, or No, in three weeks. Alas! my child, you had too good an opinion of me on All-Saints' day: it was the day M. Boucherat and his son-in-law dined here, and I could not therefore perform my religious duties. The princess was at Scaramouche's funeral oration, to the disgrace of the catholics: this is a very pretty fancy. I wish the archbishop may bring about the marriage that is so advantageous to you. My son will, I believe, shortly go into forage-quarters, that is, soon after winter-quarters.

I wish, in my absence, that M. de Coulanges would furnish you with such things as are worth knowing. Mademoiselle de Noirmoutier is to take the name of de Royan: that of d'Olonne is too hard to purify, as you say very justly. Adieu, my dearest child; you are fully persuaded then that I love you more than mothers in general love their children; indeed you are right; you are the darling occupation of my heart, and I faithfully promise you, I will never have any other, even though I should in my walks stumble upon a mill where I might be ground young again. Adieu, my dearest countess; let me know if you sleep, if you eat, if you are sun-burnt or fair, if you have the tooth-ache, if—— Good God! what would I not give to see you, and embrace you!

LETTER CCCLIX.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, Nov. 17, 1675.

Your conscience must answer for all the fine things you have said of me: you have drawn a most flattering picture of me to the intendant; but I own I had rather have your esteem and approbation than that of the whole world. I find we do not trouble ourselves much about the esteem of any but persons whom we ourselves esteem and love; and it is a mortifying reflection, when we do not receive it from these: from all which, I leave you to judge of my sentiments respecting what you have said of myself.

I told you madame de Vins had written me a very pretty letter upon her jealousy of madame de Villars: you never saw such a little bundle of thorns! I have answered her letter, and shall write to her again shortly, for she is of so affectionate a disposition, that I fear she would take a second appearance of forgetfulness too much to heart. As to her husband, you think too well of him, to suppose that it was the orders from Poland that prevented him from coming here; no, my dear, it was the order he always receives from his own timidity which makes him avoid good company. He was a whole day at Laval; he passed within three leagues of my house: all this may be vanity in me, perhaps, but it is nevertheless true. Consider how many reasons he had to call upon me: Provence, Pomponne, Grignan *.

* The marquis de Vins was a Provençal by birth, brother-in-law of M. de Pomponne, and nearly related to the Grignan family.

Yesterday I was at the princess's, where I met a gentleman of this country, a very well made man, who had lost an arm in the affair of Altenheim; I asked him a great many questions concerning the battle, and the trouble and confusion into which the army was thrown by the death of M. de Turenne: an account of this kind from a person who has been on the spot, is always curious: at length, but without knowing who I was, he fell upon the subject of the regiment of Grignan, and its colonel *, and believe me, nothing could be more delightful than the natural and unaffected praises he bestowed on that gallant young man; in short, it brought tears into my eyes. During the heat of the fight, the chevalier gave such proofs of his judgement and bravery as called forth the highest admiration; this officer knew no end of praising him, nor I of hearing him praised. The merit of this brother-in-law of yours is really extraordinary, he is universally beloved; which is what I should not have easily supposed, considering his name of the *petit glorieux*: but no, he is a different being; he is the very soul of the army, as this poor invalid says, who, by the way, is tormented with dreadful pains, every now and then, and in what part think you? why in the fingers of the hand he has lost. I should be glad to be able to account for this extraordinary circumstance, but it is beyond my comprehension. If you can explain it to me, you will do me a great favour.

I must now tell you some news about our province. I have received a whole bundle of letters from Lavardin, d'Harouis, and Boucherat, who have informed me of every thing. M. de Harlai demanded a gift of three millions, a sum that is never given but when the king

* The chevalier de Grignan, brother-in-law to M. de Grignan.

comes to Nantes: for my part, I thought he had only been in jest. But our states, like madmen, immediately complied with it; and at the same time M. de Chaulnes proposed sending a deputation to the king to assure his majesty of the loyalty of this province, and the grateful sense it had of his goodness in sending down troops to restore the public tranquillity; and that the nobility and gentry were not concerned in the late disturbances. M. de St. Malo immediately booted himself as the deputy for the clergy, and Tonquedec for the nobility; but M. de Rohan, as president of the states, wished also to go, and to take another. They all passed through Vitré, the day before yesterday: but it is an unheard-of thing, for the president of the nobility to take such a step. We have but one example of the kind in history, and that is of a Portuguese general, who left his army to the mercy of the enemy, to carry in person the news of a victory he had gained over the Castillans. We know not what to think of this deputation; for my part, I consider it as settled and concerted beforehand, and that at their return they will bring us back a remission of our taxes. I will let you know the event; at present we are all in the dark.

M. de Montmoron has been here for two or three days on business: he has a great deal of wit, and has repeated some of his verses to me: he knows and relishes every thing that is good. We read together the Death of Clorinda: do not say, my child, you know it by heart, but read it again, and observe how beautifully the combat and baptism are managed: end at *ahi vista! ahi conoscenza* *! Do not perplex yourself with complaints which would console you, and I will answer for it that you will be satisfied. Madame de Guitaut

* Gerusalemme Liberata, Canto xii. oct. 67.

has great reason to be satisfied with Joubert, for having delivered her so safely. The poor man had a tedious time of it, but these sort of labours must raise his reputation. I do not think her journey was a prudent step; the event proved happy, but would never reconcile me to such a proceeding: I shall always be miserable on these occasions, since what I saw you suffer at Aix. Madame de Bethune* acts very differently from her sister, if she goes to Poland to lie in. Her situation there will be a very pleasant one: yours seems at present a little tiresome to you, for want of hearing *no* sometimes. You are surfeited with continual complaisance. You wish for a Montausier, and I that the person you are questioning at present may not answer you *no*. This marriage appears to me a wonderful thing; that *yes* once more, and then we will wait patiently for the negative oath. Benzi has very different views; they appear the same to madame de Coulanges, as they do to me. Negatives are now chiefly made use of in part of payment; at least, they are so in this country, where we hear no answer but *no* from those whom we ask for our money. Adieu, my dearest; I think of you night and day: you teach me what true devotion is.

There is a person called the chevalier de Sévigné at Toulon, who is a relation of yours, and my god-son, the chevalier de Buous, tells me he is very brave; if he should call to pay his respects to M. de Grignan, I beg he will treat him with kindness for my sake, and render him any little service in your power. He would be glad to have a ship; as you can do any thing with M. de Seignelai, you may easily obtain him one.

* The husband of madame de Bethune was then ambassador in Poland, and she was besides the sister of Louisa d'Arquien, who married Jean Sobieski, before he was king of Poland.

LETTER CCCLX.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, Nov. 20, 1675.

I HAVE had no letter from you, my dear, which has made me very dull. Du But tells me, it is occasioned by the badness of the weather; which prevents the post from Provence coming in time for your packet to be put up in the Britany bag. I do not believe a word of this; I am afraid your cold is increased, that you have a fever, and will not suffer any one else to write to me, for fear of alarming me. This, my dear countess, is the melancholy hue of my thoughts; but I hope Friday will clear up all, and relieve me from the dreadful situation I am in at present from my disappointment, which has had such an effect on me, that I hardly know where I am.

We are in expectation of the return of M. de St. Malo, and M. de Rohan. Though they are only gone to acquaint his majesty with the loyalty of our intentions, for I believe that will be all, I am persuaded they will procure some indulgence for us. The states have allowed them two thousand pistoles each for their trouble and expenses; in short, our humour for donations exceeds all the mad houses in the world. But in all this, I pity poor M. d'Haroüis * who must certainly be ruined in having such large draughts made on him at a time when a stop is put to all his receipts. I assure you, I am heartily sorry for him.

Madame de Vins has written me another very pretty letter; I am going to answer it: I would show you

* Who was treasurer of the states of Britany.

what I write, if I had only to go from one room to another; but how can I do so at this distance? I expect my son here soon; he will help me to pass my time much more agreeably while I remain here. The *worthy* * informs you by me, that Rousseau is at Paris, and that you may write to him upon your affairs: when we get there, we shall be all employed hand and heart in serving you. You cannot make too much of d'Hacqueville; you have a great share in the correspondence I carry on with him. The good cardinal has written to inform me that winter approaches; I tell him I know it, and have desired him not to give himself uneasiness about any thing in his desert: it is not good, I tell him, to make himself uneasy in a desert, and that I will take upon me to answer for every thing; you find his eminence has not forgotten us yet. I am amusing myself with felling some large trees; the hurry and bustle of all this does not badly represent a winter-piece in tapestry; on one side, you see trees falling, on the other people sawing the timber; here they are binding the brush-wood into small bundles, there you see others loading a cart with the wood, and I in the midst of them all; so you have the picture complete. But I am going to have some more planted; for what other business have I at the Rocks?

I send a note from the count de St. Maurice, in which you will see news of the duchess of Mazarine †: he says, she is absolutely within six leagues of Paris. O what a fool! what a fool! The king, besides the ten thousand crowns he has given to madame de Fontevraud, has lately presented her with a diamond of considerable

* The abbé de Coulanges.

† Madame de Mazarine, always roving, always flying from her husband, in want of necessaries, settled at last in England, where M. de Saint Maurice, who was just returned from thence, had seen her.

value. I am very glad of it. I cannot write to the coadjutor to-day; and how will he, punctual as he is in those cases, be able to put up with the delay? Pray do not be angry with him for having sent me your letter, for it was a most excellent one: there is nothing I so much delight in. Is M. de la Garde with you? he is a man for whom I have a real esteem, and who truly deserves it. I want, in reality, to know every thing that is going on with you. Adieu, my dear, I will chat longer with you another time.

LETTER CCCLXI.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, Nov. 24, 1675.

A LITTLE patience would save a great deal of vexation. Time robs us of as much as it gives; you know we have always found it a mere shuffler, placing and displacing, ordering and disordering, imprinting and effacing, bringing together and separating, and in short, rendering all things good and bad, in such a manner that it is hardly possible to know them again. Time shows respect to nothing but our friendship, and that it will always respect. But, my dear child, whither am I got? What a strange digression is this! I was only going to tell you, that the courier came in so late, that your letters were kept back one post, and that the next I had two together; and see what a round-about mode I have taken. Well, no matter! between friends one may be allowed to let the pen take its own course. I am sure mine is very seldom curbed.

They were surprised at M. de Pomponne's, that the town-house at Aix, which appeared to you like *a den of thieves*, should have behaved so much to your satis-

faction. I think it is bettter it should be so, for the sake of peace. But the question is, whether you would not be more amused by being engaged in war, where you always come off victor: I know at least how you stand with respect to a general peace. I shall not write any thing to Paris concerning your warlike humour, lest M. de Pomponne, who is *amico di pace e di riposo*, should be angry with you. D'Hacqueville assures me that we cannot wish to be better than we are with that family; if you are pleased with it, write to M. de Pomponne, and madame de Vins; when we intend to give pleasure to a person, we always like to know how we have succeeded.

Little Marsan has committed the same fault in his way, that M. de Lauzun did, that is, delayed and talked too much of his marriage. Madame the maréchale d'Aumont had given him five hundred thousand crowns; but M. le Tellier does not wish it, and the king has forbidden it, to take place. I am told, however, that the maréchale spoke very well to the king, and that M. de Marsan said to him: "Sire, as I found that my services deserved no recompense from you, I endeavoured to place myself in a situation where I might become useful to you in future, without troubling you with my wretched fortune."

The other day the queen missed going to mass, and lost twenty thousand crowns in one morning. The king said to her, "Let us calculate, madam, how much this is a year." And Mlle Montausier asked her the next day, if she intended staying away from mass for the *hocé* again; upon which she was in a great passion. I have heard these stories from persons who come from Versailles, and who collect them on purpose for me. I am quite in the dark respecting the mysterious present made by *Quantova* to M. de Marsillac. I like your parody

extremely, it is both humorous and just. I sing it admirably, but no one hears me; do you not think there is madness or folly in singing by one's self in a wood? I am perfectly persuaded of the bishop's * vow in the battle; *e fece voto, e fil liberato* †; but mark the end, *passato il pericolo, schernito il santo* ‡. I fancy he is very much disturbed about the colour of his hat: thank God he will not have ours §, it is too well fixed on a much worthier head. M. de Cossé hates the pope, and I love him.

You are very humorous upon our misfortunes; but we have no more breakings on the wheel now, except one in a week or ten days, just to keep the executioner's hand in: in short, hanging seems to be a kind of deliverance here from greater miseries. I have a very different idea of justice and punishment, since my being here, to what I had before; and I look upon your galley-slaves as a set of happy people, who have retired from the world to lead a life of ease and tranquillity: we have sent you a few hundreds from hence, but those who are left behind are much more wretched. I told you, I was afraid they would put down our states, by way of punishment again; but they are assembled, and have made a gift of three millions, as if it was nothing; we are above thinking of the trifling circumstances of not being able to raise it, that is beneath our consideration. You ask me if we are really ruined; yes, and no: if we did not wish to leave the place, we might

* Of Marseilles, who was then ambassador to the king of Poland, whose dominions were invaded by the Turks.

† He made a vow, and was liberated.

‡ The danger past, he threw aside the saint.

§ Meaning that of the cardinal de Retz, for which the bishop of Marseilles and his friends had made great interest, when his eminence had written to the pope for leave to resign it.

live here for nothing, for we can dispose of nothing, and we can buy nothing; but, as for money, there is none to be found in the province.

LETTER * CCCLXII.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, Nov. 27, 1675.

I MUST accustom myself to this, my dear child; I receive both your packets at once: the season has deranged one of our post-days, which is the greatest evil it could occasion me, for I laugh at its cold, snow, ice, and other inconveniences. M. de Coulanges is at Paris; I have received a long and very pleasant letter from him: he will also write to you; he seems to have some excellent pens, and only wants to exercise them. We said to each other, "Where is my son? It is long since he left the army, where can he be?" For my part, I am not uneasy about him, and I am certain he is singing vespers with his pretty abbess; you know he always makes it in his way to call upon her. I send you the third little volume of the Moral Essays I mentioned to you: read it, my child, without offence to Josephus, which I wish you to finish, and tell me if you do not think this little book equal to the first that you so much admired. Mademoiselle de Méri is returned from La Trousse; I am glad of it upon your account: she is very much embarrassed about a house: this is a little like talking of ships and boats, but you know it is my way.

Be not uneasy lest I should inform them at Paris, of what you say respecting your affairs in Provence: knowing that the least jest would displease M. de Pomponne, I am very cautious of writing a single word upon

the subject, either to him or d'Hacqueville, whose sentiments are the same as his. Your consul will be elected on Saturday, St. Andrew's day. I remember this festival, and cannot help admiring how well you have succeeded in effecting what you wished, in conjunction with those who seem to be the patrons; it is because you are so much beloved: we are astonished that a governor can be loved any where. Our deputies who ran so foolishly to carry the news of the gift, have had the satisfaction to know that our present has been well received; and are returned, contrary to the hope of the whole province, without bringing back any favour. I am overwhelmed with letters from the states, every one is eager to write to me: this cross correspondence annoys me not a little. An attempt is making to reform the donations and pensions, and to return to the old regulations, which would diminish them at least half; but I would bet that nothing will come of it, and as it falls upon our friends the governors, lieutenants-general, commissaries of the king, first-presidents, and others, they will neither have the courage nor the generosity to retrench any thing.

Madame de Quintin is at Dinan: her style is as inflated as her person: those who are destined to make harangues, copy their fine periods from her; a countrywoman of quality who thinks she has all the airs of a court, is a dangerous being. There is a little madame de N*** here who has not the same address; she is young and handsome, of the family of M***, and was not changed at nurse. This is precisely what is called Britany news.

We are busied in finishing a foolish affair with a president, in order to receive the residue of our rent: it is this that detains us at present.

The marriage of the pretty prince (de Marsan) is not

quite broken off; but it is said that the treasures that were spoken of, will be reduced to a hundred thousand crowns: ah! I would not sleep with that witch † for the whole of this sum. I am persuaded, my child, you will pass the month of December at Grignan: you always shorten your stay at Aix as much as you can. You laugh at the Durance, and I am not yet recovered from my surprise at its fury and violence. I shall never forget the Chartreux de Bompas, *bon repas;* for, do you remember the entertainment they gave us? Ah! my child, I was then with you; this recollection is dear to me; I spare you all my thoughts and feelings upon the subject: your disposition and courage do not accommodate themselves to all that supports me. I amuse myself in the evenings with reading the history of the imprisonment and liberation of the prince: the cardinal is frequently mentioned in it. I seem to be only eighteen years of age: for I remember the circumstances perfectly; this makes it still more amusing. The importance of the characters pleases me more than the style: it is the only book I read of an evening. Adieu, my dearest child: you are my best love, and delight me more than the whole world; one finger is enough for calculations of this sort.

LETTER * CCCLXIII.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

The Rocks, November 30, 1675.

I SEND you, my dear cousin, the letter of attorney you did me the honour to ask me for on the marriage of my niece. No one can approve it more highly than I do.

† Madame la maréchale d'Aumont.

and so I informed you a week or ten days ago. I have even received a letter from the lover, who, from an excess of politeness, has written to ask my approbation. His letter is plain, simple, well and handsomely expressed, without being destroyed, as the play says, by a convulsion of compliments. In short, from this specimen, I can easily see that he is a man of good sense, and good principle. To these I add his admiration of you, which can only proceed from merit in himself; and his noble birth, of which the cardinal has told me: I conclude that my niece is very happy, in the prospect of being so well established. You understand me, my dear niece; I already begin by putting you one after the other, for I wish to please him: and I do not mean, loving you as I do, to disoblige you. Tell me, my good cousin, all the particulars of this gay entertainment. Our province is ruined. M. de Chaulnes has removed the parliament from Rennes, to punish the city for its conduct: it is now at Vannes, a little town, where they will be very much incommoded.

The rebels of Rennes have made their escape for a long time; thus the innocent suffer for the guilty: but I shall not complain, provided the four thousand soldiers who are quartered at Rennes, do not prevent me from walking in my woods, which are of a wonderful height and beauty. Adieu, count: since we love one another still, there is little doubt that we shall love one another always.

LETTER CCCLXIV.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Sunday, December 1, 1675.

Well, my dear, it seems now settled that I am to receive two of your packets together, and miss one post; you should see the faces I make, and how I receive it in comparison with those that come regularly. I am of your opinion, my child, and would give a great deal to be as easy about answering letters as the coadjutor is, and keep them in my pocket for a month or two without troubling my head about them. Well, it is a gift from heaven certainly, this happy indifference! Madame de Langeron used to say of visits, and I apply it to every thing; "What I do fatigues me, and what I omit to do vexes me." I think this is very well said, and I feel it sensibly. I am always exact, however, in my answers; it is with pleasure I give you the top of the basket; that is, you have the very flower of my mind, my head, my eyes, my pen, my desk; the rest fare as they can. I have as much amusement in chatting with you, as labour and fatigue in writing to others. I am perfectly stunned with the great news that abounds in Europe.

I suppose the coadjutor has shown madame de Fontevraud the letter he received from you: you are ignorant of its value: you write like an angel; I read your letters with admiration: you no sooner set out than you reach the goal. Do you remember the minuet which you danced so well, and closed in such excellent time, when the other creatures were not at the end of theirs till the next day? The late Madame and your-

self were famous for this; we used to call it *gaining ground*. Your letters are just the same.

As for your poor little *frater*, I know not where he has hid himself: it is three weeks now since I had a line from him. He made no mention of the pretty airing upon the Meuse, though every body believes it here; his fortune is really very hard, poor lad. I do not see how we can manage the affair of his promotion, unless Lauzun will take the guidonage in part of payment, with some other little additions, we will endeavour to raise: but to buy the ensign's place, and have the guidonage left upon our hands, will never do. Your reasoning upon the matter is very just; we all acquiesce in it, and shall be very well contented to mount after the other two *, provided the guidon serves as the first step.

I shall finish the year here very peaceably. There are times when all places are indifferent, and a solitude like this not unpleasant. Madame de la Fayette returns you all your civilities: she has very bad health, and poor M. de Limoges still worse; he has resigned all his benefices to the king: I fancy his son; the abbé de la Fayette, will have one of his abbeys. Poor Gascony has been as roughly handled as we have been. We have six thousand troops sent down to pass the winter amongst us: if it were not for the misconduct of the provinces, I do not know how they would be able to dispose of their troops. I cannot think peace is so near: do you remember all our reasoning upon the subject of war, and how many persons there must be killed? this is always a certain prophecy, and so is

* The marquis de la Trousse, and the marquis de la Fare; the one espain-lieutenant, and the other sub-lieutenant, in the dauphin's gens-d'armes.

that, that your letters can never tire me, long as they may be: ah! you will find no chimera in this hope, they are my choicest reading. Ripert brings you a third volume of the Moral Essays, which are worth your perusal. I never met with greater energy than there is in the style of these writers: they make use of no words but what are in common use, and yet they appear perfectly new, by the elegant manner in which they dispose them. In the morning, I read the history of France; in the afternoon, some serious subjects in my woods; such as the Essays, the Life of Saint Thomas of Canterbury, which I think delightful, or the Iconoclastes; and in the evening, things of a lighter nature: this is my constant rule. I hope you continue to read Josephus; take courage, my dear, and go on boldly to the end. If you read the history of the Crusades, you will meet with two illustrious men who were your ancestors, but not a word about the great family of V***, that holds its head so high at present: but I am persuaded there are some passages which will make you throw aside the book, and curse the Jesuit†; and yet upon the whole it is an admirable history.

The good La Troche does her duty very well, for I look upon what is done for you as no obligation: the princess and I were rummaging over some old papers of the late madame de la Tremouille's, where we found a thousand copies of verses, and portraits, among others, that which madame de la Fayette drew of me, under the name of *Incognito*: it is by far too flattering a likeness, notwithstanding some of my friends who knew

† Father Maimbourg, author of the History of the Crusades. The physician, in the Lettres Persanes, gives as a receipt for the asthma, to read all the works of this father, stopping only at each period.

me about sixteen years ago, out of their love for me, contend that it is a strong resemblance. What answer, what return can I make, my dear child, to the tenderness you express for me; unless that I devote myself entirely to you, and esteem your love as the dearest thing to me on earth!

LETTER CCCLXV.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, Dec. 4, 1675.

I WRITE to-day upon the point of a needle; for I now receive no letters from you but on a Friday, and then I have two at once. As I was returning from my walk yesterday, I met the poor *frater* *, at the end of the mall, who immediately fell upon his knees, so conscious of having done wrong in having been three weeks under ground, singing matins, that he thought he dared not approach me otherwise. I had resolved to scold him heartily, but I was so glad to see him, that I could not find an angry word to use. You know how entertaining he is; he embraced me a thousand times, and gave me the worst reasons in the world; which, however, I received as sterling: we chat, we read, we walk, and we wear away the year; or rather, what is left of it. We are determined to dispose of our paltry guidonage as well as we can, if the king will permit. M. de Lauzun may find a purchaser for his place, and we will endeavour to do the same for ours, and then we may perhaps agree together afterwards.

We are in doleful dumps about the troops that are pouring in upon us on all sides, under M. de Pomme-

* M. de Sévigné.

reuil. This has been a severe stroke on our officers: they are mortified in their turn, especially the governor, who did not expect such an answer for the present of the three millions. M. de St. Malo is returned; he met with a very indifferent reception at the states: they complain that he has made a bad bargain at St. Germain; he ought, at least, to have remained at court, to see what he could do towards an abatement of these hardships. M. de Rohan is engaged, and not yet come back, nor perhaps does he intend it. M. de Coulanges writes me word that he has seen the chevalier de Grignan, who is very dissatisfied at my absence; I am more vexed than I have ever been at not being at Paris, that I might have the pleasure of seeing and chatting with him. But do you know, my dear, that his regiment is one of those that are to be sent into this province? It would be an odd circumstance if we should see the chevalier here: I should receive him with great joy. I suppose you will not want for news from Paris, now the chevalier is there. M. de Coulanges is greatly disgusted. M. le Tellier, it seems, has opened his purse-strings, and purchased for Bagnol the post of master of the requests, and at the same time given him another place which he had promised to M. de Coulanges, and which is worth, without stirring out of Paris, more than two thousand livres a year: this is a sensible mortification for Coulanges; and if madame de Coulanges cannot bring her uncle to another way of thinking, in a conference she is shortly to have with him on the subject, Coulanges is resolved to dispose of his place immediately: he has written to me about it, and seems very much nettled. You well know the hopes that are entertained of peace: the newspapers cannot fail to inform you of this, nor of the lamentations of our unfortunate province. The cardinal writes me word that

he has seen the count de Sault, Renti, and Biron: he is so much afraid of being the object of public curiosity, that he is gone to spend the advent at Saint Michael. Talk to me of yourself, my dearest child; how are you? is your complexion injured? are you handsome when you please? I am for ever thinking of you, and you cannot oblige me more than by telling me every thing that relates to you. But I resign my pen to the honest lad at my elbow, and embrace you with all my heart.

FROM M. DE SÉVIGNÉ.

What does the good lady mean by her "honest lad?" I am treated as if I were not fit to throw to the dogs, because I was a fortnight traversing a hundred and fifty leagues of ground; and if I did stop a little by the way, pray where is the great harm of it? But I am scolded, and stormed at, because they cannot enjoy enough of my delightful company; this is the misfortune of being too charming! Ah, my dear father, why did you make me so handsome?

I have received your kind letter, and the steady and tender affection you have always shown me, makes me easily believe that you take as much interest in my affairs as you say you do: my mother has informed you exactly how they stand. You may suppose I shall hardly purchase M. de Lauzun's post, nor run into ruin for the sake of two subaltern situations. This is the extremity to which I am reduced by not taking your advice, in preference to any other; but I really think the crime may very well be expiated by seven years of purgatory, six of which I have already passed under M. de la Trousse, and that it does not merit an eternity of torments, like that which threatens me, unless I am speedily delivered by Providence: however, for this

once, I will follow the advice of the wise heads who govern us. I heard of all your triumphs in Provence, and it is impossible to say how sensibly they affected me. I embrace you most sincerely and tenderly, my dear little sister. Consider how you have always behaved towards me: consider how much you have always preferred my interest to your own: consider how amiable and excellent you appear in the eyes of every one; and then judge of my sentiments towards you.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ CONTINUES.

My dear child, Bourdelot has sent me some verses he has made in praise of the prince and the duke; he sends them to you also *. He has written that he is no poet, and I am almost tempted to ask him, "Why then do you write verses? who obliges you to it?" He calls me the mother of Love, but it is to no purpose. I think his verses very poor. I know not whether praise makes my heart ache, as it will the prince's. Madame de Villars embraces and loves you: what think you of this journey? I trust to you to say a word for me to the mournful traveller. I embrace the poor little

* The abbé Bourdelot, physician to the great Condé, pleased him infinitely by his gaiety, and even by his familiarity. Queen Christian liked him extremely. She took it into her head to learn to swear, wishing, she said, to know every thing. She selected Bourdelot for her instructor. I know none of his verses, but those he made upon the duke, who had sent him some game. "Bourdelot," says he, "is a second Orpheus:

Il a deja tiré des ames des enfers,
Et deja le gibier vient au son de sa lyre.

"He has already drawn souls from the infernal regions, and game comes already to the sound of his lyre."

Dague. The good abbé is devoted to you, and am I not also, my beloved child, devoted to you?

LETTER CCCLXVI.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, December 8, 1675.

I EXPECTED two of your packets by to-day's post, and I have received none. As gloomy thoughts are apt to hover over these woods, I was at first inclined to be uneasy about you: but the good abbé and my son assure me, that if any accident had happened to you, you would have ordered some person to write to me, and I choose therefore, to lay all the blame on the post, though I do not comprehend how it can be so irregular, and to hope I shall hear from you to-morrow.

D'Hacqueville has a cold and a little fever; I am anxious about him, for I always tremble at fevers; they say it abates, but it is life itself which abates by being undermined. Though the name of d'Hacqueville is become proverbial, there is not one of the whole race who is worthy to be compared to our good friend. Has he mentioned to you a journey the king is to take either to Champagne or Picardy? for a report of this kind has begun to spread to our sorrow. They say it is to be for three months. You see I make the most of the loose sheet, which is called news. As for his letter, it is so full of my son, and my daughter, and our affairs in Britany, that I should be unnatural if I did not put out my eyes in deciphering it. M. de Lavardin is my resident at the states; he informs me of every thing. As we sometimes fill up our letters with a sentence of Italian, I sent him these lines of Tasso, addressed by

the shepherd to Erminia, to make him understand the repose and indolence I enjoy here :—

* ———— d'ogni oltraggio e scorno,
La mia famiglia e mia gregge illese
Sempre qui fu ; ne strepito di Marte
Turbò ancor questa remota parte.

My letter was scarcely sent away, when eight hundred dragoons arrived at Vitré, whom the princess was very little pleased with. It is true, they are upon their march ; but, upon my word, they live as if it were in a conquered country, notwithstanding our good marriage with Charles VIII. and with Lewis XII †. The deputies are returned from Paris. M. de St. Malo, Guémadeuc, who is your relation, and a mitred linnet, as madame de Choisy told me, appeared at the states perfectly transported, and full of the goodness of the king to him, without paying the least regard to the ruin of the province, which was the agreeable present he brought with him. His manner of addressing the province, could not but be very pleasing to a people who were in despair at the situation of their affairs. He said, that his majesty was very well satisfied with his good province of Britany, and with the present they had made him ; that he had forgotten the past ; and had sent his troops amongst them, only as a mark of his confidence in them, as we send our equipage home

* ———— No dangers here, my son,
As yet my kindred or my flock have known ;
And these abodes, removed to distance far,
Have ne'er been startled with the din of war.

Hoole's translation of Jerusalem Delivered, book 7.

† The marriage of Anne duchess of Britany with Charles VIII., and after his death, with Lewis XII., united this province to France.

when we have no farther occasion for it. M. de Rohan conducted himself very differently, and with more appearance of a good patriot.

This is the scurvy news we have to send you; I wish to know what you have to send us in return, and what is become of your *procureur du pays*. You need not doubt but the Jansons have made great complaints to M. de Pomponne; I suppose you have not forgotten to write to him yourself, and likewise to madame de Vins, who undertook to write for St. Andiol. It is d'Hacqueville only who can serve you, and inform you of what concerns your affairs there. I am wholly useless to you *in questa remota parte**. It is one of my greatest sorrows; if ever I find myself again in a situation to be serviceable to you, you shall see how I will redeem the time that has been lost. Adieu, my dear; I wish you perfect health; it is the only thing that can preserve mine, about which you are so solicitous; it is in a very good state at present. I embrace you tenderly; and would tell you how agreeable and amusing my son is: but here he comes; I must not indulge his indolence, let him answer for himself.

FROM M. DE SÉVIGNÉ.

I SHOULD have nothing to entertain you with, my dear sister, after what I wrote to you three days ago, if I had not spent the afternoon with mademoiselle du Plessis, who is still the same charming creature. This illustrious beauty, who is to be the subject of my letter, has something so furiously agreeable, that she can only be equalled by the amiable Tisiphone. Her lip is covered with a kind of fret-work, resembling a leprosy;

* In this distant retreat.

and her bright eyes have something in them so insupportable, that we wish for the defence of an umbrella even in the shade. All her concern at present is, that this malady on her lip prevents her from kissing my mother every quarter of an hour. She has had something of the same kind upon her arm, which has kept her at home a long time: and I unluckily took the liberty to say, that the Rocks were not the less agreeable for her absence. At present, we are in hopes that she will have a tertian ague: she has been complaining of it to-day, and she renews her complaints every moment to excite our compassion. She has displayed all her eloquence in bewailing the dismal prospect of passing the whole winter, with a day of sickness for every two days of health. On our part, we expect to be attacked by a double tertian; and foresee, to our sorrow, that by means of her company, we are likely to have two bad days for the one agreeable day on which she is confined. In other respects, the Rocks are extremely agreeable. My mother continues to signalise her goodness towards this favourite place, by still adding new beauties to it. Our good abbé has spent the afternoon in drawing plans, which may remain as monuments of his taste, and of my mother's magnificence: the chapel is finished, and mass will be said in it in a week. May God long preserve to us, my dear sister, so good a mother, and so good an uncle. I say nothing of my little post in the army: every thing goes so very ill, that I conceive new hopes from my disappointments.

LETTER CCCLXVII.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, Dec. 11, 1675.

A LITTLE patience, my dear child, brings us to the accomplishment of our wishes: I have received the two packets of letters from you that I should have received before; but they are come at last, and you will do me no more than justice to believe that I am highly delighted to have them. I thank you, that notwithstanding all your philosophy, you enter into my melancholy reflections on the immense distance that separates us; you sympathise with me; you seem afflicted, as well as myself, with this disposition of Providence; but you encounter it with more courage than I do, who always feel from it some new increase of sorrow. I am continually meditating on the past, for which the present and the future can never make me amends. It is an ample field in which to exercise a heart so tender and ill-defended as mine. I cannot but admire those good ladies who make a duty of their inclination; there is La Troche for instance, who has so well turned and wound her good fortune, that she is at length settled at her ease in the good city of Paris, making it the seat of her empire, and the field of all her operations. She has fixed her son at court, in spite of wind and tide, and makes it her business to be always near him. As for Marbeuf, she had begun, even in her husband's time, and now lays no restraint upon herself; she has taken a lease of a house at Paris, for a hundred years, and most humbly takes her leave of poor Britany: whilst you, my dear child, who were born and bred in this country, you whom I have always so fondly loved,

and so ardently wished to have for ever with me, are driven to the farthest end of the world, by the storms of adverse fortune; but, if I mean to put an end to my letter, I must pass lightly over these reflections, and resume my courage in the flattering hope of a change: d'Hacqueville and I indulge some pleasing dreams of that kind; but this is not a time to communicate them to you. Let us return to the miseries of this poor province.

Every place is full of warriors; there are to be some at Vitré, notwithstanding the princess is there. Monsieur, when he writes to her, styles her his good aunt; his dear aunt; but I do not find that she is better treated than others. There are to be troops at Guerche, the estate of the marquis de Villeroi; and from thence they are to spread themselves among the country people, to rob and strip them. This is a heavy disaster upon poor Britany, that never experienced any thing of the kind before. Our governor has received a power to grant a general amnesty, which he disperses with one hand, and with the other lets loose eight thousand soldiers, over whom he has as much command as you have: they have all their orders. M. de Pommereuil is expected here every day; he has the inspection of this little army, and may very soon boast a fine government. He is the best and wisest of the robe: he is my friend; but I doubt whether he will be as tractable as your intendant, whom you manage so excellently; I am afraid he will be changed. I can give you no information to-day respecting Languedoc; in the mean time content yourself with some from Guienne: I find they are well protected, and have procured a considerable mitigation of their burthen. Alas! we are not so happy; our protections, if we had any, would do us more harm than good, by the animosity against us of

two individuals. I believe we may still find, or at least promise to find, the three millions demanded of us, without ruining our friend *; for he is so beloved by the states, that they would do any thing rather than he should suffer. And this, I think, is enough upon the subject.

I am rejoiced that you are not returned to Grignan; it would have been only an additional fatigue and expense to you. Prudence and economy, for which the good abbé desires me to thank you, have rendered that step unnecessary. Let me know if the dear little ones are to come to you. We have most delightful weather here, and we are making some new walks, which will be very beautiful. My son is very good, and helps to amuse us; he enters into the spirit of the place, and has brought no more of the warrior or of the courtier with him into this retreat, than is sufficient to enliven conversation. When it does not rain, we are not so much to be pitied, as at a distance it may be supposed: the time we have fixed to spend here will pass like the rest.

My letter has not been given to Louvois; the whole affair is negotiating between Lauzun and myself; if he will take the guidonage, we have offered to make a small addition to it; if he resolves to sell his post outright, which would be very unreasonable, he must look for a purchaser on his side, as we shall on ours; that is all. I have written to the chevalier to condole with him on our not having met at Paris: we should have made curious lamentations together on our last year's party, and should have renewed our tears for the loss of M. de Turenne. I know not what idea you have of our

* M. de Harroüis.

princess: I assure you she is no Artemisia*; her heart is like wax, it easily takes impression: she makes a boast of it, and says pleasantly enough that she has a ridiculous heart; this is spoken in general terms, but the world is rather more particular in its applications. I am in hopes I shall be able to keep this folly within bounds, by the frequent speeches I make (as if I intended nothing by them) on the detestable light in which those women are held, who give too great a rein to their passions, and how much they subject themselves thereby to contempt. I talk miraculously sometimes; I am heard, and approved, as much as can be expected. Indeed I consider it quite a duty to talk thus: and should think it an honour to be instrumental in working a reformation.

What you say respecting Fidele †, is extremely pretty and diverting. I must own my behaviour has been that of a coquette, and I am heartily ashamed of it. I endeavoured to justify myself in the way I told you; for it is certain I aspired to the supreme merit of loving only one dog, in contradiction to M. de la Rochefoucault's maxim, "That it is more rare to find a woman who has had but one lover, than to find a woman who has had none at all;" but I am really embarrassed about Marphise; I do not know how to manage, nor what I shall say to her: this leads to lying; but, at all events, I will relate the circumstances of my new engagement: in short, it is an embarrassment to which I had resolved never to subject myself; and is a striking example of human imbecility: this accident would

* The affectionate and chaste wife of Mausolus, king of Caria, whose ashes she drank after his death.

† The little dog mentioned in the letter of the 18th of November.

not have happened to me, if I had not been so near Vitré.

I am tired to death with the barrenness of news; we stand in great need of some event, as you say, let it be at whose expense it will; as long as we have no more Turennes to lose, *vogue la galère*. You tell me extraordinary things; I read them, admire them, believe them, and then you send me word they are not true: I well know the style and braggart of the provinces. You judge superficially of our governor, when you say you should have acted as he did, had you been in his place: I know you would not; neither did the king's service require it. Ah! what is become of the excellent understanding you had last winter? This is no time to think of deputations: let us see peace restored, and then we shall have time to think of every thing.

As to the religion of the Jews, I said, when reading their history, that "if God had given me grace to have been born a Jew*," I should have liked it better than any other except the true religion. I admire its magnificence; but you must admire it still more, on account of its year of rest, and of dressing-gowns, which would have given you an opportunity of being a shining example of piety in your elbow-chair; never would sabbath have been better kept. Ripert has received the Moral Essays; they contain several treatises, and amongst the rest one that is particularly pleasing: you will guess which I mean. I am delighted with your good health and beauty, for I love you truly. I often wish for you in these woods, the air of which, as well as that of Livri, is a great preservative to the

* In allusion to an expression of M. de Rochefoucault, who said, "If God had given me grace to have been born a Turk, I should have died a Turk."

complexion. Our good abbé praises you highly for your care in discharging your debts; for that, in his estimation, is the law and the prophets; and as M. de Grignan is so prudent, I will embrace him notwithstanding his beard; but do you know that your little brother's beard has the presumption to rival it? it is to much purpose! Send me word of your success at play. It seems to me as if I saw your little fingers taking out of the pool; but these times are past: good and evil travel on the same road, but they leave different impressions. You have given a great dinner: where was I? for I know all; I see all the magnificence from hence. You express yourself admirably on the marriage of the little prince (de Marsan) and the maréchale; the disproportion is doubtless great, but suppose he should have escaped it! Believe me, you have no need of my letters, you can write delightfully without a theme. But I must reduce myself at last to Solon's rule, "Nothing is to be praised on this side the grave:" which is a heavy restriction for me, who dearly love to praise what is praise-worthy; besides, who can stay so long? For my part, I shall always go on in my old way: adieu, my ever-lovely and beloved child.

LETTER CCCLXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, Dec. 15, 1675.

Ah! my child, how much I have just been walking in *my daughter's whim! my mother's whim* is thought no more of in this country. I come from my woods: the walks in them are beautiful, and I should never be tired of them. There are six new ones you have never seen, and those you have seen are very much improved. The

mall is more beautiful than the rest, and, besides, it is *my daughter's whim*. It is now mild and dry. I remained till after dusk, because no troops have passed to-day: when any come to Vitré, they oblige me, against my inclination, to retire an hour earlier. It is there, my child, I have leisure to love you: I can easily comprehend that you have not always time to do this; we must enjoy it when we can. You were engaged in a thousand things which prevented you from finding your affection at a given time; but it is true, that in three days you repaired this distraction sufficiently: you seem to have acquitted yourself wonderfully of your promise to love me again; you are now at leisure to do so, and I am sure you love me very much.

I am delighted that Roquesante is with you; he is, without disparagement to the rest, the most gentlemanly man in Provence, and one whose heart and mind are the best suited to yours: you have very much obliged me by giving my compliments to him without waiting three weeks: some things may be easily answered. Remember me also to your worthy cardinal (Grimaldi): God preserve him to you for a hundred years to come: I fancy he was one of those who contributed to fix the hat upon the head of our cardinal.

You astonish me by saying that my letters are good: I am delighted that they please you, you know my feelings upon that subject. I say nothing to you of yours, lest I should give you the fat abbé's pain in the calf of the leg; otherwise, I know what I could say, but I will show you a few of them, some day, and you shall judge yourself. You are right when you suppose, I wish for nothing so much as to have an opportunity of being reconciled to Fontainbleau, but I cannot yet get rid of the remembrance of what it made me suffer. You have seen the abbé de la Vergne then, it seems,

and have got the Moral Essays; those I sent you, arrived almost as expeditiously as our letters. The treatise on tempting God, appeared to be the most useful; that on the resemblance of self-love and charity, the most luminous, to use their own expression. But let me have your opinion of them.

You have judged very rightly what it is that causes my indifference respecting our return to Paris; it is such, that were it not for the affairs which call us thither, I should see no reason to prefer one day to another for leaving this agreeable desert: but many reasons make us resolve to take our measures so, that we may arrive at Paris in the beginning of Lent, which is the best time for pleading; and I am a little like the countess of Pimbéche; I hope every thing will go well.

Since you desire to know how the affair I have with Meneuf goes on, I must inform you, that he is in despair at our serving upon him a certain instrument of justice, which leaves him no farther pretext for delaying the payment. He had counted upon an escape as to five or six thousand francs, which is prevented by a paper we have found. I am obliged to the abbé for this discovery, for Vaillant had the paper in his hands, but did not know the virtue of it: but it is written in the book of fate, that I shall be under all sorts of obligations to him. I may now expect the termination of this affair. It is a pleasure to see the convulsions of dishonesty, which is at a loss for a stratagem, and can find no new pretext by which to defend itself.

I cannot imagine what Berbisi means; he tells me positively that he has sent you the sparrows; I will write to him again about it; I love to see with what expedition M. de Grignan devours them. In the mean time I embrace him, even though it should be the third

day of his thorny beard: it is, I think, impossible to expose one's person to danger with a better grace. I had resolved to treat the chevalier in the same manner; but I am afraid we shall only have his regiment here. I designed to have told you, that if I could get him hither, I should devour him with caresses; but you have prevented me by telling me so: I own you have not guessed amiss in supposing, that I should be extremely pleased to see him. If we can escape the heavy rains of the season, I am sure he would not spend his time here disagreeably.

Tell me, my dear, of your success at play, and of your health. I was not long in pain about your cold; it was not the post immediately after I heard of it, that failed. I have since received four packets in a week, two at a time; not one of your letters has been lost; as for the irregularity of the post, we must make up our minds to it. Do not let it be known at Paris that I shall not return so soon: not that I fear any one there would hang himself, if he knew of my delay; but because I would not give Mirepoix the pleasure of knowing it.

Adieu, my dear; you cannot deceive yourself in believing that I love you with my whole heart. Your brother is coming, who will give you an account how I spend the fast-days, and that mass was celebrated today for the first time in our chapel; for though it has been built four years, it wanted all the ornaments necessary to make it fit to be used. Our abbé loves you, and conjures you to employ yourself continually in counting, calculating, and computing, for that should be your principal care. What signifies having money, if we cannot tell what is due to us? Your farmers do their duty much better than ours: you pay off your arrears better than any person of the court; this is a

great honour and credit to you. I am out of patience at hearing nothing more of the marriage of your maid. Madame d'Ormesson is marrying her son to a young widow; I will let you know when it will be proper for you to congratulate him.

Our states are broken up: we are short of the money we are to raise by nine hundred thousand francs: this gives me uneasiness on account of M. d'Harrouïs. They have retrenched half the pensions and gratifications. M. de Rohan did not dare, considering the dejected state of the province, to promote amusement of any kind; but that old mitred linnet of sixty, M. de Saint Malo, thought it becoming in him to begin; not, as you may perhaps expect, by appointing some solemn procession, or the prayers of forty hours, but by giving the ladies a ball and supper. It was a public disgrace: M. de Rohan, though he was ashamed of it, was forced to continue it. Thus, like the dying swan, we sing over our own ruin. My son will tell you where he found this simile: I believe it was at the end of Quintus Curtius.

FROM M. DE SÉVIGNÉ.

My aunt de Biais taught me this erudition, but she did not teach me to do what I did yesterday, of which I am going to give you an account. You know, or at least you may suppose, that I spend all my time at the Rocks; and am consequently unacquainted with the adventures that happen in this country. A numerous assembly of the clergy came to assist at the ceremony of opening our chapel; M. du Plessis was amongst them. I thought it proper to turn the conversation on something that concerned gentlemen of their profession; and I began with inquiring what was become of M. de

Ville-Brune. They told me, he was fled for refuge to Lower Britany, and that he had lost his benefice. I replied, that I always thought he would not keep it long, and that there would be found some cunning sharper, who would get it from him. I went on to enlarge upon the knavery of Ville-Brune, and assured the company that the capuchins had given me a strange character of him, and that indeed his life made all they said of him but too credible; for a brother, who had profanely thrown off his capuchin's frock, must certainly be a man of very indifferent principles. This fine speech had two very good effects. The first was, that the abbé du Plessis is the cunning sharper, who by base ingratitude made poor Ville-Brune lose his benefice: and the second, that the rector of Breal, who performed the ceremony, had been himself a capuchin; so that my words were a two-edged sword to those two reverend gentlemen, like that mentioned in the Apocalypse, which when I read, I did not suppose it would have produced this effect in me. Another piece of erudition. Last Friday was the first fish-day I have spent here; and I asked my mother Thursday evening what she did on Fridays. "My dear," said she, "I eat a slice of bread and butter, and I sing." Whatever there is of good or bad in this, it is literally true.

My mother advises you to write a few lines to madame de la Fayette, upon the abbey the king has lately given her; she went to thank him for it last Wednesday: his majesty received her very graciously: and madame de la Fayette embraced his knees with the same tenderness that made him shed tears before, for the danger the duke would encounter in five or six months. She saw madame de Montespan; M. du Maine conversed with her, and this train of prosperity has brought a letter of two pages to my mother: this

is a little in the Ravaillac style. Adieu, my dear little sister, continue to love me, and obtain for me the same favour from M. de Grignan. Tell him that I love and honour him; and that, finding myself incapable of imitating him in his excellent qualities, I endeavour at least to make my beard resemble his, as far as is in my power; and that I should think myself too happy, if I could give it that glossy colour, which a raven might envy, and which makes him appear in your eyes and mine a perfect Adonis.

The divine La Plessis is still indisposed. This is the day in which we are to expect our fit; pity us, for her visit, which is worse than that of the ague, is likely to be long, and may perhaps begin at ten in the morning. We have lately had in her place a very pretty damsel, whose eyes do not at all resemble hers. By her means we have set on foot the game of *reversi* *, and instead of *biguer* †, we pronounce it *bigler*. I hope the pleasure of repeating this simple term in presence of La Plessis, who is so much a critic, and so impatient of any impropriety of expression, will be no unpleasant revenge on her for her impertinence. She salutes you with her ruby lip. To show you the age and capacity of the little lass we have with us, I must tell you, that she assured us the other day, that the day after Easter-eve was on a Tuesday. Observing us smile, she corrected herself, and said it was on a Monday; and finding this did not succeed, she cried out, "Oh! what a simpleton am I! it is on a Friday." You see what doubts and perplexities we labour under; if you will have the goodness to tell us on what day it really is, you will extricate us from a very great difficulty.

If you find any confusion in the date of this letter, it

* A game so called.

† A term in the game.

is because my mother wrote her part of it yesterday evening after she came in from her mall, and I write mine this morning, before I go out to hunt squirrels there.

LETTER CCCLXIX.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, Dec. 18, 1675.

I HAVE just been writing to M. de Pomponne, and madame de Vins, in pursuance of d'Hacqueville's advice. I fancy I have written in the proper strain; I always send my letters open to him (d'Hacqueville), who is terrified at seeing so many persons ready to fall upon us: he is afraid you should have neglected to send up the defence made by your friends: he finds the affair is come before the council, where M. de Colbert has a voice, as well as M. de Pomponne, and he was willing to be supported with my poor letters, of which he is to make what use he sees proper. It vexes me, that I am not upon the spot to attend to this affair myself; not that I imagine I could do better than d'Hacqueville, but then there would be two instead of one, and I should have the satisfaction of being of some little assistance to you; but Providence has not thought fit to indulge me with my desire. It is certain that d'Hacqueville will leave no stone unturned; for never was man more zealous in the cause of a friend than he is: he is a treasure of goodness, friendship, and ability, and for exactness and assiduity, no one can compare with him. I now live in hopes of seeing this affair speedily and happily terminated. Not but that I shall open the letters I receive from him with some emotion, because I look upon myself as particularly interested in an affair

of so much importance to you, and your province. You are advised not to have recourse to reprisals with regard to the nobility: those you might attack have less than they think, but more than enough: we shall see. I am at a curious distance to thrust my head into this sort of affairs! I wrote three days ago to the illustrious *Sappho* *, and to Corbinelli; but I have no fears from that quarter; it is a minister I fear.

I have spent a day at Vitré with M. de Pommereuil, who told me before the princess, that he had staid purely on my account. He talked much, both at Malicorne and Laval, of his intimacy with me, and how greatly he esteemed me: for my part, I made no reply, for I hate people who pretend to know all the world; it looks so presuming, that I cannot endure it. I was therefore quite silent, till M. de Pommereuil had ended his wonders, and then I simply nodded assent. We soon entered into a very long conversation; we took Britany to pieces, while the princess was at prayers with her little flock. He is received every where lik a god, and not without reason, for he is come to restore justice and good order, and to be a curb upon ten thousand men, who would otherwise eat us all up alive. His commission is to continue no longer than spring; and he accepted of it purely to make his court, and not his fortune; for that goes in a different channel, he thinks of nothing but how to please every body. He will live very well with M. de Chaulnes, but he will make the most of every point he may give up for the sake of living quietly; for he is sensible that, provided one does not yield like a fool, it is the best way not to make a stir about trifles, as it can only tend to the hinderance of the service. He spoke to me of you, which

* Mademoiselle de Scuderi.

gave me as much pleasure as if he had talked to me of myself.

You have discovered very humorously the source of our attachment to confessors: it is precisely the reason which makes us talk for ten years following with a lover; for with the former, we had rather, like mademoiselle d'Aumale*, speak ill of ourselves, than not talk at all. I am told this precious personage will cut a fine figure at her return. I am astonished at what I hear respecting madame de Maintenon; it is said she is not so much the object of general admiration as she was; and that the proverb has been verified in her; my friend at Lyons seems less fascinated with her: the lady of honour † too, seems to cool a little upon it: all this gives room for moral and religious reflections, to my little friend: take no notice of this. I would advise you to write a word or two by d'Hacqueville, by way of congratulation to madame de la Fayette, on the abbey she has lately had given her. Adieu, my dearest child: methinks I do not love you much to-day; well! I will love you the more for it another time, so comfort yourself with that. Tell me your opinion of the Moral Essays: is it not a charming book?

* Mademoiselle d'Aumale, sister of madame Schomberg, was the pupil, and confidential friend, of madame de Maintenon: she established herself in a nunnery at St. Cyr. The author of the Memoirs of Maintenon, quotes, in many places, from the authority of her manuscript Life of madame de Maintenon.

† Madame de Richelieu.

LETTER * CCCLXX.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

The Rocks, Dec. 30, 1675.

I CANNOT comprehend why I have not written to you; for it is certainly my place to congratulate the new bride on her new marriage, to pay my compliments to the new husband and the new father-in-law. In short, my dear cousin, all is new but my friendship for you, which is very old, and which often makes me think of you, and of every thing that interests you. I had taken it into my head that you had promised to send me the particulars of the wedding, and I believe I was waiting for this: but it would have been an excess of politeness, and by all the rules of etiquette, it is my place to begin. I am very glad you were pleased with my little story; I thought yours of madame d'*** equally good. For my part I do not see the necessity of banishing them when they are short, and full of wit, as yours always are; no one certainly can tell a story with so much effect as you do: my daughter and I have often said so.

LETTER CCCLXXI.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNTESS DE GRIGNAN.

Vitré, Dec. 22, 1675.

I AM come here, my dear child, to see madame de Chaulnes, the little personage, and M. de Rohan, who are going to set out for Paris. Madame de Chaulnes had written to request me to come and take leave of her: she was to have come to the Rocks yesterday, but

her excuse was, that she was afraid of being robbed by the soldiers that are upon the road, and therefore M. de Rohan had desired her to stay till to-day: but all this while fish and flesh suffer for it, for I have expected her ever since Thursday. I think it is acting rather too familiarly, after having written to me positively that she should come. The princess herself thinks it not quite right; but after all, we must excuse persons who are a little beside themselves: I hope you will never experience a thousandth part of what they have suffered within a month. Ten thousand men have been sent into the province without their having been apprised of the matter, or having any more power over them than you have. M. de Pommereuil is with the troops at Rennes; he is considered every where as a divinity, though every step he has taken has been previously concerted in Paris; but then he keeps up the strictest discipline, and prevents his men from committing disorders; this you will allow is a great deal. Madame de Rohan and madame de Coëtquen have been greatly relieved since his coming. The princess de Tarente is in hopes that Monsieur and Madame will procure her some relief too; and indeed it is much to be wished, for she has not a foot of land besides the estate here, and it would be a disastrous circumstance to see all her tenants ruined before her face. We shall be safe, if she is so. This, my dear, is a long article from Britany; but we must put an end to the subject; you can judge how full the head is of such matters in the country.

I did not wait for a letter from you, to write to M. de Pomponne, and to madame de Vins. I did my best. I took counsel of d'Hacqueville, who, if I am not mistaken, expects something considerable from that quarter. Let me desire you not to check your pen when it is upon the subject of Provence: your affairs are mine:

in short, curb it in nothing, for it is an admirable one; and when it is unrestrained, we may say of it, as of Ariosto's, that it charms where it leaves off, and where it begins: every subject you take up, makes amends for that you lay down. The passage about throwing off the monk's habit to please his holiness, is truly laughable. But do not tell it to M. de Grignan, with his gravity; for my part, God forgive me, I cannot help finding something uncommonly humorous in it; nothing can be written with more life and spirit. I think you are even more sprightly in your letters, than in your conversation. You long, you say, to be alone: good heavens, my dear child, come to these woods, they are a perfect solitude; the weather is still so fine, that I spend every day there till dusk, and I think of you a thousand and a thousand times with such affection, that it would be to understand it very little, if you think I could describe it. My son plagues me with a foolish book he is perpetually reading at my elbow, it is Pharamond *: he takes me from my more serious reading, and, under the pretence that I shall hurt my eyes, he obliges me to listen to nonsense that I could wish to forget. He is very good, for he is always thinking of something to amuse me. He intended to have written to you to-day, but I do not think he will be able to do it, for we are not at home, and while I am writing to you, he is entertaining the princess at ombre, in her own chamber, who always speaks of you in terms of the greatest esteem and admiration.

If I were allowed to give you my advice, my dear, it should be to lay aside all thoughts of going to Grignan. What end will such a journey answer? and then there is the Durance, and a bleak north wind: in short,

* A romance of La Calprenede's.

what need is there for so much hurry and bustle? You are very comfortable at Aix, why not pass your winter there? For my part, when I am in the country, I never think of cities, and if I were perfectly settled in a city, the thoughts of the country would strike me with horror. I talk a little at random, for want of properly knowing your reasons. What those of M. de Maillanes may be for loving La Trousse I cannot tell, but I hope they are good ones. These gentlemen honour us sometimes with their ill humours, but make themselves perfectly adored by strangers: I have heard a great many good things of Maillanes, and that the prince has mentioned him to the king, in the most favourable manner, and as a youth of great bravery. I was delighted when they told me this at Paris. Pray, my dear, let us see how far the coadjutor's indolence will carry him: good heavens! how happy he is, and how much could I envy sometimes his strange indifference to every thing that passes in life! This is all the news I have to tell you of him.

I have told you how Bourdelot has honoured me, and you also, with his cold approbation. I said enough to make you understand that I find him exactly as you found him. Good heavens! what an excellent answer I wrote him! It is foolish perhaps to say this of myself; but I had a very good and a very spirited pen on that day: what a rage I was in! Is it possible to have understanding and not to know it?

I hear you have a band; I am persuaded it is a good one: you know I honour every thing that is music; but, though I pretend to some skill in it, I am not equal to M. de Grignan. Has madame de Beaumont as much wit as ever? and Roquesante too? do they still fast upon bread and water? what need is there for all these penances, when he has brought so many plenary indul-

gences with him? They certainly do not want any assistance or support. But let us say a word or two about Denmark. The princess * is at the siege of Wismar, with the king and queen, where the two lovers perform actions worthy of a romance. The favourite has negotiated a marriage for the prince, and left the lovely princess to hear the news from common report; nay, he was two whole days without seeing her; this was not the action of a fool. I should not be surprised if it should at last appear, that he is the son of some king of the Visigoths.

You alarm me, with the intelligence that your old widow is about to marry a young man. It is not right to entertain too good an opinion of people at first; it is much better to wait a little, and observe their proceedings. You are surprised, you say, that the good folks about you cannot comprehend, why you should sometimes wish to be absent from them; and I, on my side, cannot bear the reflection, that they should have the barbarity to wish me to pass my life always at the Rocks, without thinking of returning, or any society more delightful than that of mademoiselle du Plessis; it is very mortifying to think that a whole province should have such an opinion of one, as to think that one has no acquaintance at Paris; I had intended to complain of it to you.

By dint of selling, mortgaging, borrowing, and bestirring ourselves, we have made shift to raise our three millions. *Nous serons si sots que nous prendrons la Rochelle* †. This is an old saying, that I would have you apply. We have given the usual gratuities, and have

* Daughter of the princess de Tarente.

† "We shall be silly enough to take Rochelle." A vaunting speech of the great men at the siege of Rochelle.

even saved M. d'Haroüis from the danger he was in. But they have treated M. de St. Malo so rudely, that his nephew (Guémadeuc) found himself obliged to challenge a gentleman of Lower Britany. Adieu, my dearest child: it is not one of the least obligations I have to you, that you enter so perfectly into the pleasure I receive from your long letters; and I hope you will always feel that they constitute the joy and comfort of my existence, and that I know no sorrow greater than that occasioned by a delay of the post.

Sunday.

I was obliged to leave off yesterday owing to the arrival of madame de Chaulnes, M. de Rohan, and the little personage; they supped here, and set out this morning for Laval, and from thence directly to Paris: if I am not mistaken, M. de Rohan is not sorry to be with the little personage. Madame de Chaulnes gave me a long detail of affairs at the states; I brought her to agree that M. de St. Malo had made himself ridiculous with his ball: she seems extremely mortified about the troops, as well as her husband, who remains at Rennes equally embarrassed with the presence of Pommereuil. All this little party spoke much of you. When I am at the Rocks I will write to you more fully. Indeed, my child, my greatest comfort is thus conversing with you.

LETTER CCCLXXII.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Tuesday, Christmas-day, 1675.

This is a day, my dear child, in which I have given my pen liberty to write what it pleases; it chooses to

begin by the joy I feel at having left Vitré, and being returned hither in peace and repose, after two tedious days of talk, ceremony, and patience, in listening to all the idle news that is prepared for Paris; I had the satisfaction, however, to find fault with some of it, particularly the ball M. de St. Malo gave the states. Madame de Tarente laughed heartily to see me so warm and full of my reasons of disapprobation. But I had rather be in these woods in the manner you know, than be at Vitré with the air of a fine lady. The good princess * went to her religious assembly: I heard them all singing one another deaf †. I felt real pleasure in hearing mass after it; I have not for a long time been so much pleased with being a good catholic. I dined with the minister: my son disputed like a demon. I went to vespers in the pure spirit of opposition: this has taught me a little to comprehend the sacred obstinacy of martyrdom.

My son is gone to Rennes to see the governor. Last night we performed our devotions in our fine chapel. I have still the little countrywoman, who is very pretty. Her house borders on my park. The mother is gone to Rennes, and I have kept the daughter with me. She plays at trictrac and at reversi, is agreeable enough, and has great vivacity and cheerfulness of manner. Her name is Janette; she incommodes me a little, like Fidele. La Plessis has an ague. It is amusing to see how angry and jealous she is when she finds this girl here, and the strife there is between them to hold my cane or my muff. But enough of this: I have made a great deal out of nothing.

The Forbins have an affair of great importance, on

* Madame de Tarente. She was a protestant.

† *Chanter les oreilles.* An expression of Panurge in Rabelais.

the subject of little Janson *, who has killed Chassigrimon, the nephew of M. de la Feuillade, in a duel. This affair is before the parliament; and the king has said, that if justice had been done on the death of Chateau-Vilain, there would not have been so many duels since. Thus is another youth obliged, like the rest, to leave France, and to take refuge in a foreign country. This is a house of great intrigue.

What is your opinion of poor madame de Puisieux? Her cold has fallen upon her lungs. This disorder has been very prevalent here. Our relation Sanci died of it in three days: he was a great favourite with me, and I am grieved at his death. Desire d'Hacqueville to give your compliments to the Rarais: nothing more is necessary. The cardinal has intrusted me with the secret of his being at Saint Michael to pass the holidays; but he desires me to say nothing of it for fear of giving offence. It was impossible for me to forbear communicating to him the article from Rome, in your last letter. It is arranged with perfect harmony: I am sure he will think it inimitable, and that he will recognise the beauties of the style and sentiments of his dear niece.

Madame de Coulanges has had a long conversation with her fat cousin †, which she hopes will be very

* The same who, after having retired to Germany, where he served at the siege of Vienna, and the taking of Buda, returned to France under the name of count de Rosemberg, shortly after war was declared between that country and France. He was employed in a foreign regiment, and was dangerously wounded at the battle of Marseilles. He afterwards retired to the monastery of La Trappe, where he took his vows the 7th of December 1703, under the name of brother Arsene, and was one of the nine monks who were sent the following year into Tuscany to establish the ancient observance of Citeaux, in a monastery of the same order.

† M. de Louvois.

much to the advantage of M. de Coulanges. Has not the great lady written to you? Madame de Vins has just written me a very pretty letter, and, as you say, as full of flattery as herself. She tells me, the only way not to wish for my friendship, is never to have seen me. The whole letter is in the same strain: it is a bundle of feathers, instead of a bundle of thorns.

Do you know La Boulai *? I believe you do. He met madame de Courcelles † by accident; to see her and to adore her was the same thing; a fancy took them to go to Geneva, where they are at present; and from whence he has written Manicamp ‡ the most entertaining letter in the world. Madame de Mazarin, on her part, is rambling about the wide world: it is thought she is in England, where you know there is neither priest, nor faith, nor law; but I do not believe it is true that, as the song says §, she is for driving the king away too.

We are grieved for Jabac: what a foolish discovery, and how disagreeable are old sins ‖! The good abbé will desire Rousseau to endeavour to pacify him till our return. Is it not insulting a lady of your rank to occupy your time with such nonsense as this? I say "as this," because there is no sense of a different kind. Yours is always entertaining; but mere impertinences, without rhyme or reason, though ridiculous, are not diverting. I conclude with wishing you a merry festival ¶, and assuring you, that I love you with an af-

* He was the *Mat*, and an excellent companion.

† Marie Sidonia de Lénoncourt.

‡ M. de Longueval-Manicamp, the intimate friend of M. de Boulai.

§ Chanson de Blot.

‖ She means an old debt for goods delivered to madame de Grignan.

¶ The custom of wishing a merry festival (*souhaiter les bonnes fêtes*) at Christmas and Easter, is still retained in many provinces, and particularly in Provence.

fection which will in all probability accompany me *in articulo mortis* †.

Did I tell you, that madame de Fontenaux paid a visit to madame de Coulanges, merely to see your picture? No pilgrimage was ever undertaken in honour of a lovelier saint.

LETTER * CCCLXXIII.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, Dec. 29, 1675.

I THANK you, my dear child, for having preserved some remembrance *del paterno nido* ‡. Alas! our house would not know itself for joy, if it could receive you: why is it not possible to see you again in these beautiful walks? What say you to the marriage of La Mothe §? Are beauty, youth, or propriety of conduct, necessary to procure a settlement for a young woman? Providence! Providence! to that only can we have recourse.

Madame de Polisieux ‖ is raised from the dead again; but only to die two deaths within a very short time, for she is eighty years of age. Madame de Coulanges tells me what good society there is in our part of the town; but this does not tempt me to return sooner than I at first intended. I am only impelled by business, for as to pleasure, I expect none, and the winter here is not

† Till death.

‡ Of the paternal nest.

§ One of the three daughters of madame de la Mothe Houdancourt, who were all notorious for their adventures in gallantry: this lady married the duke de la Ferté. L'Histoire Amoureuse des Gaules, shows the consequences of this marriage. Scandalous as this book is, what madame de Sévigné says of the personages who are there described, proves that it contains more scandal than calumny.

‖ Charlotte d'Estempes Valençai, died December 8, 1677.

so bad as it is supposed to be: it gives me no horrors. The society of my son is very agreeable to me, and he finds me no less so to him; there is not the least air of mother and son in our conversations. The princess is surprised at it, who has a son without a soul. She is very much disconcerted by the troops, which are arrived at Vitré; she hoped, with reason, to be exempted from them; but notwithstanding that, she has a whole regiment in her town. It would have been a pleasant circumstance, if it had been Grignan's regiment: but do you know, it is stationed at La Trinité, that is, at Bodegat *? I have written to the chevalier (de Grignan) not to derange any plans, for every thing is fixed, but that my farmer, my banker, and my steward, may be treated mildly and honourably; it will cost me nothing, and will gain me great credit: this estate is allotted to me, in the division of property.

If I see La Castellane † here I shall treat him handsomely; his name, and the place through which he passed in the summer, will make him of consequence to me. The business of my president goes on well; he is disposed to pay me: this is one of the affairs that brought me here. The one the abbé de la Vergne has undertaken is worthy of himself: you represent him as a very respectable man.

Do you not intend to read the Moral Essays, and to give me your opinion of them? For my part, I am charmed with them; and so I am with the funeral oration on M. de Turenne; there are passages in it which must have affected all that were present. I do not doubt but it has been sent you; tell me if you do not think it very fine. Do you not intend to finish Jose-

* An estate that belonged to the house of *Sévigné*.

† A relation of M. de Grignan's.

phus? We read a great deal of serious as well as lighter subjects; fable, and history. We are so deeply engaged with these, that we have scarcely leisure for any other employments. They pity us at Paris; they think us confined to a fire-side by the inclemency of the season, and languishing under a dearth of amusement; but, my dear, I walk; I find a thousand diversions; the woods are neither wild nor inhospitable. It is not for passing my time here instead of at Paris, that I am to be pitied.

M. de Coulanges has sanguine hopes, from a conversation his wife has had with M. de Louvois. If he had the intendency of Lyons conjointly with his father-in-law, it would be an excellent thing: and this is the world! every one thinks there is no happiness out of Paris, and yet labours to establish himself at a hundred leagues' distance from it. I cannot comprehend the new passion of the *charmer* (M. de Villeroy); it is not to be supposed that he can find more than one subject of conversation to entertain a mistress of so low a taste. They say her husband has forbidden her any other company but that of madame d'Armagnac. Like you, I fancy I see this ancient Medea armed with her wand, and dispersing at her pleasure all those airy phantoms the gallants. They say M. de la Trousse has formed a design upon La Maison; but I do not think he has obtained his liberty, and I could reverse last year's song:

La Trousse est vainqueur de Brancas,
Tête ne lui resiste pas,
De lui seul Coulanges est content,
Que chacun chante, &c.*

* La Trousse has conquered Brancas; Tête is not able to resist him; Coulanges is satisfied with him alone. Let every one sing, &c.

But this is between you and me, my dear; and I know that, in other company, I must change my note.

The length of our answers alarms us, and makes us comprehend the vast distance that separates us. Alas, my child, how painfully I feel it; and how melancholy does it make me! Were it not for this, should I not be too happy in having such a son with me? He will tell you himself, how grieved he is in being at such a distance from you. Adieu, my dearest. Write to me of your health and your weather; every thing, trifling as it may be, is interesting to me. My health is as good as you could wish. I expected your brother, but he is not returned. He is a weak creature: but if he should marry, while he is upon this little expedition! I am certain, however, they detain him upon no serious design; if he amuses himself where he is, it is well. Adieu, my dearest. Does M. de Grignan salute me?

LETTER CCCLXXIV.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Tuesday, New Year's Day, 1676.

We have now entered upon the next year, as M. de Monbason said. I wish it may prove a happy one to you; and if you think the continuance of my love can make any part of that happiness, you may safely calculate upon it.

This letter from d'Hacqueville will inform you of the success of our affairs in Provence. It exceeds our hopes; as you will see by the letters I received a few days since, which I send you. The thorn is now happily extracted; the den of thieves is demolished; the ghost of M. de Marseilles is laid; the credit of the cabal is vanished; insolence is trodden to the ground;

but let me conjure you to use your victory with moderation: consider, as our friend d'Hacqueville says, that prudence and generosity oblige you to it. You will see also how I betray his secret to you, for the pleasure of drawing aside the curtain, which he had intended to keep closed even to you. But I cannot consent to leave you in doubt of the sentiments you ought to entertain for the friend, and his sister-in-law *, for it appears to me, that they have even done more than they have told me; and as the greatest recompense, they desire no acknowledgement. Treat them, therefore, in their own way, and enjoy in silence their true and substantial friendship. Take care not to let a word escape you which may discover to the good d'Hacqueville that I have sent you this letter; you know him well; his scrupulosity would not allow him to comprehend this poetical licence. Thus, my dear, I throw myself upon your mercy, and entreat you not to draw me into a quarrel with a friend, to whom we have so many obligations. In short, I put myself in your power, and, knowing your fidelity, I apprehend no danger from it: but you must likewise answer for M. de Grignan, for it would be no satisfaction to me to have my secret kept by you and betrayed by him.

I have another secret to tell you: this is with me a day of revealing secrets, and likewise of discovering disappointed lovers. Your brother is returned from Rennes; the only trophy he has brought from thence is a simple song, which has made me laugh. It expresses in verse what I told you partly the other day in prose. We have thought of an advantageous match for him, but it is not yet mature: the fair one is not quite

* M. de Pomponne and madame de Vins.

fifteen, and they wish her to be a little older, before they think of marrying her.

What say you to the ingenious damsel we mentioned to you in our last, who was at a loss to determine the day after Easter-eve? She is a pretty little creature, and diverts us much; her age is under fourteen. I wish you could see her in a morning devour immense slices of bread and butter, and in the afternoon scrump up green apples with brown bread. Her simplicity, and pleasing figure, are a relief to us after we have been teased with the impertinence and affectation of mademoiselle du Plessis.

But let us change the subject: have they not sent you the funeral oration on M. de Turenne? M. de Coulanges and the little cardinal have almost ruined me in postage of letters; but I am pleased with this expense. It seems to me, that I have never seen so fine a piece of eloquence. They say the abbé Flechier has hopes of surpassing it; but I defy him. He may perhaps give us a finer picture of a hero, but not a finer picture of M. de Turenne; this is what M. de Tulles has performed inimitably, in my opinion. The description of his heart is a master-piece; the rectitude, simplicity, truth, integrity, and unaffected modesty, of which it was composed; in short, every thing is represented with so much justice, that I am charmed with it; and if the critics cease to esteem it, since it has appeared in print,

Je rends grâces aux Dieux de n'être pas Romain *.

Will you not say one word of the Moral Essays, of the treatise of tempting God, and the resemblance be-

* "I thank the gods that I am not a Roman:" a verse of Corneille's in the Tragedy of the Horatii.

tween self-love and charity? Ours is a fine conversation, maintained at a hundred leagues' distance! however, we do all that is possible to be done in such a case.

I send you a note written by the pretty abbess. How playfully she writes! This sample may suffice to give you an idea of the charms of her wit.

Adieu, my dearest; I charge you to keep all my secrets. I resign the pen to the pretty gentleman who stands at my elbow. He says you dipped yours in fire to write your last note to him; it is true, nothing was ever so entertaining.

FROM M. DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Why did I say in fire? it was in gall and vinegar that you dipped that impertinent implement, employed by you in making so many ridiculous reflections, begging your pardon, on your humble servant. How can a lady, so skilled in gallantry, suppose me incapable of choosing a mistress? Is it because I was for three years devoted to a pious damsel, who was only to be captivated by a lover who could charm her by the winning eloquence of his sermons, and the graceful manner of his benedictions on the prostrate people? You have just reason to believe that I was soon disengaged from her chains. You know me to be too good a catholic to dispute any thing with the church: and it is a regulation made long ago, that the clergy are to have the preference of the nobility in obtaining favours from ladies. I have lately met with a note composed by a great luminary of the church. He addressed it to the saint he adored, and humbly implored her to answer his tenderness by some proof of hers. His words are these:—"Refuse me not, I beseech you, this favour; and consider that you

will do me a singular office"—of Christian charity, I presume. Was not this very pathetic? If my letters to madame de Choisi were less passionate, they were not perhaps less gallant. I am now again the slave of another beauty, since I have been at Rennes. It is madame de ****, she that behaved herself so prettily at the church of the capuchins: you may remember that you diverted us with mimicking her. She is grown a wit, and repeats the elegies of the countess de la Suze in the dialect and accent of Britany.

That precious piece of affectation mademoiselle du Plessis is constantly with us from nine in the morning. She gave us the other day a most entertaining account of a little secret malady which had given her great uneasiness. She came, she said, to pay her devoirs to my mother, the moment she had taken a certain medicine to comfort her bowels, which she had been obliged to have recourse to, to allay a soreness, occasioned by too powerful a dose of rhubarb.

I wish you a happy day and a happy year, my dear sister; and desire the favour of you not to insult me, or undervalue my taste, which I assure you is very good: as a specimen, I bring forward my regard for M. de Grignan, whom I very much honour.

LETTER CCCLXXV.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Saturday, Jan. 5, 1676.

Here they are two; and they are both very welcome. I never yet received three packets at a time; I should have been quite out of patience, because I must have waited for them twelve days, and I think eight sufficient. As to my being fatigued with so much reading,

it is impossible your style should ever tire; I defy even you, who pique yourself upon such extreme want of application, as renders it difficult for the most artful writer to engage your attention, to forbear to read even with eagerness the most trifling part of such letters as yours. This is a pleasure you have no possibility of experiencing, and which I have dearly purchased: I would not advise M. de Grignan to envy it me. It is true, the intelligence we receive from Paris is delightful: I am like you, I never answer a single word to it; but I am not dumb for all that; my son and my daughter furnish me with sufficient subjects for writing, as you will see by the last letter I sent you.

You have much obliged me, by explaining to me the reasons of your going to Lambesc: I should not have failed to have asked with surprise and concern, what urgent affair could have drawn you thither. I think the little inconvenience of a stiff neck, was well recompensed by its excusing you from the fatigue of dining with such a crowd as you escaped by it; you did very well in leaving your herd to feed by themselves.

I shall never forget the astonishment I was under at a midnight mass, when I heard one of our profane airs sung as a part of that religious ceremony; this novelty surprised me extremely.

I suppose you have by this time read the Moral Essays. Tell me, are you pleased with them? The passage in Josephus which you point out to me, is one of the finest that can be read: you must confess there is a grandeur and dignity in his history, which you can find in no other. If you entertained me more with yourself, and your manner of employing your time, I should have less to say of my amusements, and our correspondence would be more agreeable. Among friends who love, and are interested in, each other, nothing is more

pleasing than the mutual interchange of speaking of themselves; we take from others to give to ourselves. You may have seen, by what my son has said of our neighbour †, that she is not of this opinion; she entertains us with particularities relating to her person, which we have not the least curiosity to know.

It were well if our soldiers here were like your cordeliers; they amuse themselves with stealing and plundering: the other day they were for making the experiment of roasting a young child; it would be endless to relate the rest of their disorders. M. de Chaulnes wrote me word, that he wished to pay me a visit; I very graciously desired him not to give himself the trouble, and frankly told him, I declined the honour on account of the trouble it would occasion, since I could not receive him here with so much ease as at Paris.

You have seen my letter of consolation to B****; could I write to him differently? You paint him to me so very naturally, that I still fancy his very thoughts are visible to me, if that be possible, for I own there is a great obscurity in his words.

You tell me very seriously, speaking of my letter, that your father and I were not at all related to each other: I desire to know how he was allied to you in your opinion? If you do not answer this question, I will ask the little damsel who is with us; perhaps she may resolve this difficulty as learnedly as she determined that concerning the day after Easter-Eve. We are so much pleased with her simplicity, that mademoiselle du Plessis is almost dying with jealousy of her. She inquires of all the family how I treat her; and there are none of them to whom it is not an amusement

† Mademoiselle du Plessis.

to stab her to the heart, by giving her repeated instances of my fondness for her little rival. One tells her, that I love her as well as I do my daughter; another, that she sleeps with me, which would certainly be the greatest proof of my affection for her; another, that I intend to take her with me to Paris; that I kiss her; that I doat on her; that my uncle the abbé will give her ten thousand francs, and that, if she had but twenty thousand crowns, I should certainly marry her to my son: in short, there is so much nonsense of this kind, and every thing is so well kept up among my little household, that we frequently cannot help laughing at the variety of stories they invent: while we are diverting ourselves, however, poor du Plessis is dying with envy. But the best is, that you should know her so well, and reason so justly, when you observe, that if her ague leaves her upon my approach, she certainly counterfeits it; however, she has been teased so much, that I believe we shall give it her in good earnest. This family is certainly destined to divert us. Did I never tell you, that her father once kept us in a continual roar of laughter for six weeks together? My son begins to comprehend that this neighbourhood is the chief beauty of the Rocks.

I think there is something very entertaining in the rendezvous of your traveller with M. Deverguez. Their arrival on the same day at the Cape of Good Hope, seems to have fallen out as exactly as if they had agreed to meet upon the plain at a certain hour to hunt. You cannot doubt of the pleasure it would be to me to converse with this gentleman from the Indies, for you remember how much I have teased you to read Herrera *, which I have read myself with great delight. If

* A Spanish writer, author of a general history of India in four folio volumes, and of many other historical works.

you have as much leisure and application as I have, this Spanish History would furnish an entertainment worthy of you.

Our good friend d'Hacqueville passes to and fro between Paris and St. Germain without ceasing, for the sake of our affairs; were it not for this, we should scarcely endure the tedious letters he favours us with. I confess to you, that the passage in question has a little too much of repetition; but you will pardon my curiosity which begun it, and my pen continued it: for I assure you the pen has often a great share in the superfluous words with which our letters are filled. One of my wishes to begin the year with is, that mine may be as pleasing to you, as yours are to me.

The good princess still loves me; she has been a little indisposed, and has taken a sweat, which is her sovereign remedy in all disorders. The late count de Lude said, he had never had any illness in which he was not relieved by it. It is M. de Chesnay's remedy for all bodily pains; and if I had a stiff neck, and took any remedy that was advised, as I always do, you would be surprised to hear that I was under the archet. The princess always speaks wonders of you; she knows and esteems you. For my part, I believe that, according to the ancient doctrine of the transmigration of souls, your former existence was in Germany; you were, doubtless, the king of Sweden, and one of her lovers; and from thence she has derived those impressions of esteem and affection she has for you. Adieu, my dear; all our family salute yours. But here comes your brother.

FROM M. DE SÉVIGNÉ.

You cannot conceive, my dear sister, how much humour there is in what you say of mademoiselle du Plessis, till you hear that she has taken the pains to act an ague this year, and contrived that it should leave her on the very day my mother went to dine at Plessis. The joy of hearing that my mother was there, transported her to such a degree, that she vowed by all that was sacred, that she was well, and was very angry that she was not dressed. But somebody said, "Mademoiselle, do you feel no shivering?" "Come, come," replied this amiable Tisiphone, "let us amuse ourselves; say no more of my ague; it is a sordid interested distemper." "Interested, did you say?" said my mother. "Yes, madam, because it would have me all to itself." "I should have thought it generous," replied my mother in a low tone. This did not prevent the pleasure of seeing so much good company at her house from banishing the ague, which in reality she had not; but we hope the excess of her jealousy will soon give it her. We are under some apprehensions that she will poison the little damsel, who goes every where by the name of the favourite of the princess and madame de Sévigné. She said yesterday to M. Rahuel, "I had the satisfaction, as I was sitting down at table, to see madame push away this little girl, to make room for me next to herself." Rahuel replied in his rough manner; "Oh, mademoiselle, I do not wonder at that, it was only doing honour to your age; besides, this young girl is considered at present as one of the family; madame treats her as if she was a

younger sister of madame de Grignan." This was all the consolation she had.

You have reason to speak ill of the troops in Britany; they do nothing but kill and plunder; they do not at all resemble your monks. Though I am very well satisfied with my mother and my uncle, and have some reason to be so, yet I think I had best take your advice, and turn them out of doors at the end of this month: however, that I may do it in a handsome manner, I will send some guards with them to Paris, to prevent their being robbed, as they pass through a province so safe under the protection of military government. Adieu, my dear sister; have you been very gay this Christmas? You have *sent your cattle to grass:* that is right. Provence abounds with hills and dales: I only wish you gentle shepherds, to keep you company. I embrace M. de Grignan: he makes me no reply; but I will take my revenge of him by continuing in good health, and returning safe from every campaign.

FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ.

These are excellent fooleries to entertain you with. If the post knew what trifling materials our packets are made of, it would certainly drop them half-way. I will tell you a dream on Wednesday.

LETTER CCCLXXVI.

TO THE SA[illegible]

The Rocks, Wednesday, Jan. 8, 1676.

This is the day on which I was to tell you my dream. You must know then, that about eight in the morning,

after having dreamed about you all the preceding night, though in a confused manner, I thought I saw you plainer than ever, that we were together, and that you were so kind, so good-humoured, so amiable, and so fond of me, that I was almost beside myself with joy; at last I awoke, but with such a dulness and load upon my spirits at the grief of losing this lovely vision, that I began to sigh and weep so immoderately, that I was obliged to call Maria; and with the help of a glass of cold water, and some of your Hungary water, I recovered myself a little from the dreadful lowness of spirits, but could not get a wink more sleep. It lasted me near a quarter of an hour; and all I can say about it is, that I was never in such a state before. Observe, however, that this is one of the days on which I give my pen the reins.

You have passed a fortnight very dully at Lambesc: I should pity any other person, but you are so fond of solitude, that time so spent is a carnival to you. But what do you say of St. Geran, who has left her fat husband to spend her carnival at Palisse? Such a journey as this, which cannot take her up less than a month, and at such a season of the year, is a matter of surprise to every one: she will doubtless return in time to attend the sermons. The great Bethune said, when he heard of M. de St. Geran's having received a wound by a cannon-ball before Besançon, "St. Geran is an honest and a good man, but he must be killed before his worth will be truly estimated." His wife, however, does not think so, nor do I; but this was the first thing that happened to present itself to my pen. The princess came here yesterday, quite weak with her profuse sweating. She is almost distracted at the ravages committed on her estate by the military, and the little attention of Monsieur and Madame towards relieving

her. She thinks madame de Monaco contributes to this forgetfulness, in the hope that, by distressing her in her income, she may prevent her coming to Paris, as her presence always robs her of some part of Madame's favour, to whose sleeve she is for ever pinned. Indeed the aversion is reciprocal: à-propos of reciprocal, a gentleman belonging to the princess told me pleasantly enough, that when he was at the ball which M. de St. Malo gave to our states, he overheard a Bas-Breton declaring his passion to a young lady, to which the fair one made a proper reply; but he continuing to press his suit with great ardour, the nymph, whose patience was quite exhausted, made him this answer, "Sir, you may love me as much as you please, but, upon my word, I cannot be *reciprocal*." I think this kind of answer the best, and, indeed, the only one, that can be given, to cut such addresses short at once.

My son is gone to Vitré to see the ladies: he left a great many remembrances for you. I fancy honest d'Hacqueville will settle the sum that is to be given for the exchange; and as Lauzun will take our guidonage, the little *frater* will mount a step. Cloris only nine hundred leagues from port.

We have had dreadful weather here for these two or three days. It rained trees in the park, and shrubs in the garden. I believe all our marriage-schemes have been carried away by the high wind; one father tells us his daughter is but fifteen, and he will not marry her till she is twenty; another, that he would have a robe at least: but, however, we have not to reproach ourselves with want of attention. Adieu, my dearest child; will you not suffer me to embrace you?

LETTER *CCCLXXVII.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, Jan. 12, 1676.

You may fill your letters with whatever you please, and still be assured that I read them with great pleasure and equal approbation; no one can write better than you do, and it is not my friendship only that leads me to form this opinion.

You delight me, by saying you like the Moral Essays; did I not tell you they would suit your taste? As soon as I began to read them, I could think of nothing but of sending them to you; you know I am communicative, and do not like to enjoy a pleasure alone. If this book had been written on purpose for you, it could not have been more calculated to please you. What language! what energy in the arrangement of the words! I think I never read French but in this book. The resemblance of charity to self-love, and of the heroic modesty of M. de Turenne and the prince to Christian humility—But I forbear; this work deserves to be praised from beginning to end; but I should write a strange letter if I were to do so. I am very glad, however, you like it, and I have a better opinion of my own judgment in consequence. You do not admire the Life of Josephus; but it is sufficient if you approve his actions and his history. Did you not think him very happy in the cave, where they drew lots who should stab himself the last?

We laughed till we cried, at the story of the girl who sung the indecent song for which she confessed, aloud, in the church. Nothing can be more novel and amusing. I think she was in the right: the confessor

certainly wished to hear the song, for he was not satisfied with the girl's accusation of herself. I fancy I see him bursting with laughter the first at this adventure. We often send you ridiculous stories, but we cannot surpass this. I always talk of Britany, and it is to encourage you to talk of Provence; it is a country in which I am more interested than in any other: my journey thither takes away all possibility of being tired with what you tell me, because, I am acquainted with every body, and understand every thing perfectly. I have not forgotten the beauty of your winters. Our season is very fine here: I walk every day, and have almost made a new park round the waste land at the end of the mall. I am planting four rows of trees there: it will be a great improvement, for all this part is now uniform and cultivated.

But I shall take my departure, in spite of all these charms, in February: the abbé's affairs are still more urgent than yours, which has prevented me from offering our house to mademoiselle de Méri: she has complained of this to several persons, I understand; but I know not what reason she has to do so. The worthy is in raptures with your letters; I often show him passages that I know will please him. He thanks you for what you say of the Moral Essays; he was delighted with them himself. The little girl is still with us; she has an active little mind which has never been exercised, and we take pleasure in improving it. She is in perfect ignorance; it is an amusement to us to give her some general knowledge: a few words of this great universe, of empires, countries, kings, religions, and wars, of astronomy and geography: it is pleasant to see the unfolding of all these things in a little head which has never beheld a town or a river, and who thought the whole world extended no further than our park; she

amuses us highly. I informed her to-day of the capture of Wismar; she knows we are sorry for it, because the king of Sweden is our ally. Such are our amusements. The princess is delighted that her daughter has taken Wismar: she is a true Dane. She has asked Monsieur and Madame to exempt her entirely from the soldiery, so that we shall all be safe.

Madame de la Fayette is very grateful for your letter; she thinks you very polite and obliging: but does it not appear strange to you that her brother-in-law is not dead, and that such mistakes should arise at the short distance of Toulon and Aix? Upon the questions you put to the *frater* I decide boldly, that he who is angry, and shows his anger, is preferable to the deceiver, who conceals his malignity under fair and specious appearances. There is a stanza in Ariosto descriptive of guile *: I would transcribe it, but I have not

* We shall probably gratify the reader by inserting this stanza:

Havea piaceval viso, abito onesto,
Un umil valger d'occhi, un andar grave,
Un parlar si benigno, e si modesto
Che parea Gabriel, che dicesse: Ave.
Era brutta e deforme in tutto il resto
Ma nasconde queste fattezze prave
Con lungo abito, e largo, e sotto quello
Attossicato avea sempre il coltello.

Orlando Furioso. Canto xiv.

Her garb was decent, lovely was her face,
Her eyes were bashful, sober was her pace;
With speech whose charms might every heart assail,
Like his who gave the bless salute of—Hail!
But all deformed and brutal was the rest,
Which close she covered with her ample vest,
Beneath whose folds, prepar'd for bloody strife,
Her hand for ever grasped a poisoned knife.

Hoole's Translation, Book xiv.

time to look for it. The good d'Hacqueville still talks to me of the journey of St. Geran, and to prove how short her stay will be, he says she can only receive one of my letters at Palisse. This is how he treats an acquaintance of a week: he is just the same with respect to others, but this is excellent. I forgot to say that I had thought like you of the different ways of painting the human heart, some white and others blacker than black. You know what colour mine is of, for you.

FROM M. DE SÉVIGNÉ.

I AM not at all in good humour; I have just had a conversation with the *worthy* on the badness of the times, and you know what a heart-breaking subject that is. I could not however help smiling at the story of the young girl at Lambese: you may guess what I should have done, if I had been in my usual spirits. She was as anxious to receive absolution, as the good father was to hear the song, and probably they were both satisfied. With regard to the Moral Essays, I humbly ask your pardon for saying that the Treatise on Self-Knowledge appears to me forced, sophistical, in many places absolute nonsense, and extremely tiresome from beginning to end. I honour the Methods of tempting God with my approbation: but can you, who admire and are so excellent a judge of good style, at least if one may judge by your own, can you set in competition the style of Port-Royal with M. Pascal's? It is this which gives me a distaste for every other. M. Nicole introduces a great many fine words into his, but in the end they weary, and make me sick; it is like eating too much *blanc-mange*: this is my decision. I must tell you however, by way of appeasing your wrath, that I am in some degree reconciled to Montaigne. He has some

excellent and inimitable points, and some puerile and extravagant ones: I do not retract that opinion. When you have finished Josephus, pray read a moral treatise of Plutarch's entitled, "How to distinguish a Friend from a Flatterer." I have read it again this year, and was more pleased with it than at first. Send us word whether the question you ask me of persons whose anger evaporates in vehement language, or those who conceal it under specious appearances, relates to madame de la Fayette: we know nothing, because we do not perhaps know all you know. I rebel against what she says of M. de Tulle's funeral oration, because I think it fine, very fine; I rebel less against her unfavourable opinion of the Moral Essays; and without having read the new opera, I agree heartily to all the ill she says of it. My beautiful little sister, adieu.

LETTER CCCLXXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Friday, Jan. 17, 1676.

You have talked to me of stiff necks till you have given me one, for I cannot move my right side; these are little ailments, my dear, that nobody compassionates, and yet I assure you they are very painful. My hopeful son is bursting with laughter: I shall certainly rap him upon the knuckles as soon as I am able. In the mean time, my dear, I embrace you most cordially with my left arm. The *frater* is going to entertain you with some trash. Your Hungary water will have cured me before this letter has reached Paris. Adieu, my dear child.

FROM M. DE SÉVIGNÉ.

I AM not laughing at my mother, though she tells you so; but her disorder has nothing in it to cause the least alarm; and so we pity her, and amuse her in her bed, and do all that lies in our power to relieve her. I conclude you will depend upon the abbé and me, in what regards the health of a person so precious to us both: be perfectly easy in this respect, my dear sister, for, depend upon it, we shall be quite well when you begin to be anxious about us.

I now send you the history of our province. You are already informed on what terms M. de Coëtquen is with M. de Chaulnes; they have lately been at daggers-drawn, and the former has actually presented a memorial to the king, complaining of M. de Chaulnes's conduct since he has had the government. After this, he returned to his government by his majesty's orders, came to Rennes, waited upon M. de Pommereuil, and staid in the town from eight o'clock in the morning till nine at night, without going near M. de Chaulnes; nor did he intend it, as he told M. de Coetlogon, and seemed to pride himself in braving M. de Chaulnes in his own capital. About nine at night, just as he had got to his inn, and thought of nothing but going to bed, he heard a coach stop at the door, and saw a person come into his room with an exempt's staff*; this was M. de Chaulnes's captain of the guard, who desired him from his master to come immediately to the bishop's palace, where he at present resides. Accordingly M. de Coëtquen followed him down stairs, where he found a coach, surrounded by four and twenty guards, which

* An *exempt* is a kind of military messenger.

he stepped into, and was conveyed without disorder or noise to the bishop's palace. When he came there, he was introduced into the antichamber, and there left for nearly a quarter of an hour, with proper people to prevent his making his escape. At length M. de Chaulnes appeared, and said to him, "Sir, I have sent for you to order you to pay the francs-fiefs in your government: I know," added he, "what you have said to the king, which you will be called upon to prove;" and then turning his back upon him, retired into his closet. Poor Coëtquen was quite thunderstruck, and returned to his inn, half-mad with rage and vexation.

LETTER CCCLXXIX.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, Jan. 19, 1676.

I AM much better, my dear; this same stiff neck was in truth a very pretty fit of the rheumatism; it is a disorder attended with violent pain, and want of rest and sleep; but it gives no apprehension respecting the consequences. This is the eighth day; a gentle dose of medicine and a sudorific will restore me again. I have been bled once in the foot, and now abstinence and patience will put the finishing-stroke to the disorder. La Mousche is very attentive, and has not quitted me night or day.

I read your letters yesterday, my child, with extreme pleasure; they are a delightful conversation: I desire you will not pretend to tell me that your success in Provence is a matter of indifference to you; I know not what is pleasing, if so complete a victory is not; which, at the same time, is attended with the most agreeable and honourable consequences on your side.

I had the pleasure of hearing this agreeable intelligence a little before you; and the assembly of the noblesse has completed my satisfaction: I send you M. de Pomponne's letter; I think nothing can exceed his friendship. D'Hacqueville writes me word that our cardinal has an inflammation on his lungs: I am much more uneasy about him than myself. I would, with great pleasure, write you twenty or thirty pages, but it is really more than I can do at present. My son shall fill up the rest. Adieu, my dearest child, I embrace you to-day with my right hand.

FROM M. DE SÉVIGNÉ.

You see, my dear sister, by what my mother writes, the true state of her health, and how little reason there is to be alarmed at her present disorder, which begins to go off, and to be relieved by gentle sweats; her sufferings were so great, that it cut us to the soul to witness them. I hope you do me the justice to believe, that I do all in my power to assist and amuse her. I heartily wish I could be of any real service, but unfortunately, I am good for nothing, unless for having brought Larméchin, who does wonders day and night. Your letters are very necessary, and very efficacious in diverting the pain of our dear patient. It is a pity we cannot receive them oftener than once a week. Do not give much credit to your philosophical notions about your affairs in Provence; you may see by M. de Coulanges's affair, of which I informed you in my last, that yours is not the only province where there are intrigues and cabals. Is it not very high of d'Hacqueville, to write us an account of this affair, from Paris, when we are but seven leagues from Rennes? as if he thought we never heard any thing of our own savage country.

You have doubtless heard of the disputes that happened at the nuptials of La Mothe, which were not inferior to those at the marriage of Thetis; for Discord with her snaky locks had insinuated herself amongst our duchesses and princesses, who are the goddesses of the earth; but, at length, all is calmed, and there is no more talk of war; that we have at present upon our hands * is fully sufficient. We have read the opera; but you never saw tastes so corrupted as ours are become, since we have been in Britany. We look upon the funeral oration of M. de Tulle as extremely beautiful, and we think the opera † this year infinitely superior to any we have had before. As we did not get it till yesterday, we have only read the prologue and the first act, which we honour with our approbation; but pray do not think that we do the same with respect to the continuation of Pharamond; we anathematise every thing, that is not written by Calprenede.

Adieu, my dear sister; we endeavour to amuse our good mother as much as possible, which is all that she now stands in need of, for the disorder will take its course, and we do not think she will be quite well for these three weeks. Her fever left her precisely at the seventh day, which plainly shows you there is no danger. Pray do not write us any letters that may make us uneasy, they will come unseasonably, and the vexation of knowing that you have been alarmed for her, will not tend to your dear mother's recovery.

A thousand compliments to M. de Grignan, and to his beard.

* With the Dutch, the Spaniards, and the Germans.

† Atys, written by Quinault.

LETTER CCCLXXX.

M. DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Tuesday, Jan. 21, 1676.

In the first place, my dear sister, let me entreat you, not to alarm yourself at no seeing my mother's handwriting, but firmly believe what is told you by the good abbé and myself. The swelling still continues so much in her hands, that we do not think it advisable to let them be exposed to the air: and another reason is, that since yesterday, which was the ninth day of her disorder, the inflamed and swelled parts have begun to perspire, which must on no account be checked, as it is the forerunner of health, and the only means of getting the disorder out of her joints. Her fever is gone, and nothing remains but a little pain and much swelling. This is the real situation of our dear little mamma. Do not imagine that any care is wanting, or that any precaution has been neglected. There is a very good physician at Vitré who has bled her in the foot admirably well. She is taken as much care of here as she could have been at Paris, and what is still better, she herself thinks so: in short, we should have nothing now to do but to laugh, could we find an expedient for her to lie in bed at any other person's expense; but as that cannot be done, it is somewhat inconvenient to her. The disorder has been more severe and painful, than any she ever experienced; but as it is become a kind of necessity to be ill this year, it is infinitely better for her to have had the rheumatism with all its inconveniences, than one of those inflammations that have been so prevalent; especially as we are in a country where it is next to an impossibility to be bled in the arm with

any degree of safety. In short, we have every day consolation in our sorrow, and we almost feel greater pleasure in seeing her hands packed up in flannels, and in being unable to stand, than in seeing her walk in her avenues, and hearing her sing from morning to night. The little girl who is with us, when she saw my mother's pain increase towards evening, used constantly to burst into tears. She is the object of du Plessis' unceasing jealousy, who makes no small merit with my mother of hating her like the devil.

I must tell you a droll adventure that happened to-day: My mother was fallen into a little doze in her bed; the abbé, the little girl, and myself, were sitting round the fire; du Plessis came in, we made signs to her to walk softly, which, to give her her due, she obeyed very punctually; but she scarcely got to the middle of the room, when my mother waked, coughing, and called for her handkerchief; the little girl and I got up to give it her, but du Plessis was beforehand with us, and running to the bed-side, in the hurry of her zeal, instead of applying it to my mother's mouth, pinched her nose so hard that she made her cry out violently; my mother snuffled out her dislike of her officious zeal, and then we all fell a laughing, as you must have done, had you witnessed the scene.

Adieu, my dearest sister; be in no uneasiness or alarm at what is going on here: before this letter reaches you my mother will have been to take the air a little in the garden; if any thing extraordinary should happen between this time and to-morrow, you shall know it before I close my packet. But the delight is, that nothing can now happen, but for the better. I heartily embrace M. de Grignan.

LETTER CCCLXXXI.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Monday, Jan. 27, 1676.

My hands still continue swelled, my dear child, but that is a certain sign of the departure of the rheumatism, which has always been losing ground since the crisis we mentioned to you.

M. DE SÉVIGNÉ WRITES FROM MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ'S DICTATION.

It is true, the grand perspiration, and some trifling ones since, have completely carried off the fever and the pain, and I have now nothing to complain of but weakness: but I was obliged to lie in bed for a fortnight without being able to turn. I am now settled very comfortably in my little alcove. I wish your brother was not my amanuensis, that I might tell you all he has done for me on this occasion. My disorder has been very general in this neighbourhood, never failing to attack those who escaped the inflammation on the lungs: but to tell you the truth, I did not consider myself as subject to this common law, and never was poor woman more humbled, nor treated more against her inclination. Had I made a proper use of this affliction, it might possibly have turned to my advantage; but I am impatient, my dear child, and cannot conceive how people can live without legs, arms, or hands. You must excuse this letter, my dear, as coming from a sick person: when I next write to you, I hope to write like other people. I thought when I was ill with the fever,

that I heard them say, cardinal Grimaldi * was dead; if it is so, I shall be very sorry. Adieu, my dearest child, I only want to recruit my strength, and to abate the swelling. I embrace M. de Grignan. The princess has behaved with great attention to me during my illness.

FROM M. DE SÉVIGNÉ.

I HAVE nothing left to say to you, my dear sister, except that the abbé and I have had a dispute. He asserted that a line or two in my mother's own hand, however badly written, were absolutely necessary towards making you quite easy; I, on the contrary, maintained that they were more likely to increase your fright; and that you would have always done us the honour to confide in what we told you about her health, and that our accounts would perfectly have removed your uneasiness: this is my opinion, for I never can suppose that you would consider me so hardened or insensible, as to write in a jocose strain, at a time when I saw myself threatened with the most dreadful of all calamities. Pray let us have your opinion to decide the dispute.

I salute M. de Grignan, and kiss La Dague's forehead.

* Jerome de Grimaldi, archbishop of Aix, died cardinal dean the fourth of November 1685, aged 90, extremely regretted by his whole diocese, especially by the poor, to whom he was a constant and noble benefactor.

LETTER CCCLXXXII.

TO THE SAME.—DICTATED BY MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ: WRITTEN BY HER SON.

The Rocks, Wednesday, Jan. 29, 1676.

You will think it very odd, my child, when I tell you that I am quite cured, that I have neither fever nor pain, and yet do not write to you: but the very reason of this is, because I am cured. My pains are turned to a swelling; so that my poor hand is not capable even of scrawling, as it has done for some days past. But this is an inconvenience that will not last long. I have now nothing left to do but to comfort myself for the uneasiness my bed has given me for this fortnight past. I begin to walk about my room, I recover my strength: this is a delightful situation, compared with my former one, and therefore I entreat you to be under no uneasiness on my account, while we think ourselves so happy.

I have read your two letters, they are divine; you give me admirable accounts; if ever my hand is at liberty again, I will certainly answer them; in the mean time, be assured that I lose nothing either in point of correspondence or friendship. One of the greatest pleasures I had in my recovery, was the thought of its relieving you from the uneasiness you endured, which now you ought to throw entirely aside, since we have told you the real truth, and that I am now in the high road to health. I embrace you, my dearest child, from the bottom of my heart; *the worthy* * does the same; —and as to me, my dear sister †, you will believe I am

* The abbé de Coulanges.

† This is written by M. de Sévigné as from himself.

not behindhand. I have nothing to say to you to-day, for myself, except that I am very happy that we are so well out of this affair.

LETTER CCCLXXXIII.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Friday, Jan. 31, 1676.

Be under no concern about me, my dear child; I am perfectly well, except that my hands and feet are violently swelled, and that I am unable to assist myself; but this inconvenience, which is inconceivable, will soon, I am told, go off. I have been a thousand times more comfortable here than I should have been at Paris; I am waited upon, and treated like a queen.

FROM M. DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Oh, what beautiful writing! Do you not think my mother had better not have written to you at all? We wished to prevent her, but she would do it: I hope it will serve to make you more easy; and do you, in return, wish us a little patience to bear with the swelling and weakness that remain. My mother imagined that the instant her pain had left her, she might have played at leap-frog. She is a little disconcerted to find herself so much mistaken. All will go well, if our impatience does not produce any ill effects.

We would have sent a letter of madame de Vins', which my mother received by the last post; but we put it by so carefully, that it is not to be found. You must be content then to know in general terms that it was a very friendly and civil one. Madame de Vins tells us, that she is convinced the Grignans had reason

and justice on their side, in the two last affairs; that she had not written to you, because she was certain you had too much good sense to wish to renew the dispute, when the cause was removed. She adds, that she appeared to interest herself so warmly in favour of the Grignans, as being in the right, that she is suspected by the other paty. This is the general purport of the letter, which I suppose we shall find a fortnight or three weeks hence. Such pains were taken not to lose, or mislay it, that it has certainly been put into some safe corner, where nobody might get at it, and we cannot get at it ourselves. Adieu, my dear sister.

LETTER CCCLXXXIV.

TO THE SAME.—DICTATED BY MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ; WRITTEN BY HER SON.

The Rocks, Sunday, Feb. 2, 1676.

My dearest child, we have read your last two letters with a joy and satisfaction, that nothing else could produce; but we dread those we are next to receive, in which you will exclaim upon my illness, and charge it to my own account, and that will not be doing me justice; for every creature in this country, has had rheumatism, or inflammations; take your choice. Madame de Marbeuf has been dangerously ill these six weeks; so you see, my dear, we must pay the tribute one way or other: and as to your frights and uneasinesses, they begin precisely at the instant they should end; for I am now free from pain, and fever, and have nothing left of my rheumatism, but a little swelling in my hands. I can complete my cure by the exercise of walking, and recover all I lost during my confinement to my bed. I have suffered some inconvenience, my dear,

but nothing that can be called danger. I think of nothing now but gaining strength, and returning to Paris, from whence I shall let you know how matters go on.

I cannot write to you to-day, my right hand being so much swelled; the swelling in my left is considerably abated, and the skin looks wrinkled; we are delighted to see it so. I assure you the rheumatism is one of the finest pieces in the world: I have a very great respect for it. It has its beginning, increase, crisis, and end. Thank Heaven, I am at present in the latter stage.

I think I have represented madame de Vins, and her brother-in-law, in a very satisfactory light to you; it is one in which they appear to me. They did not choose to seem what they really are; they have their reasons for it; and we certainly ought to allow our friends to serve us in the way they think best. I think they have managed matters very circumspectly, with regard to Provence; this should be the rule of our conduct, which is so much the more easy to be observed, as they have drawn aside the curtain to me a little, and I assure you the prospect is delightful for you. They have both written to me on hearing of my illness, which is very obliging; I send their letters; keep all my little secrets, and let us both be careful how we complain of those whom we have the greatest reason to commend.

I pretty well guess what a noise and bustle you have in your rotunda *. Send me word whether the good Sanes plays at piquet still, and whether he thinks himself alive: we must amuse ourselves while we can. If you were as fond of dancing as your daughter is, I

* A little closet or drawing-room, so called, because it was made in an old round tower belonging to the palace of the county of Provence, where M. de Grignan resided when at Aix.

should not pity you. I never saw a girl naturally so fond of it. I am quite of your opinion respecting the Moral Essays. I scold your brother, but here he comes to speak for himself.

FROM M. DE SÉVIGNÉ.

And I say, that the first volume of the Moral Essays would appear to you in the same light as it does to me, if La Marans, and the abbé Têtu, had not accustomed you to such subtle and abstracted distinctions. The most intricate stuff imaginable now appears clear and easy to you. Of all the things that were ever written on man, and the interior of man, I never met with any thing I liked so little as this: the strokes and descriptions are above the reach of every common capacity. Pascal, the logician of Port-Royal, Plutarch, and Montaigne, write in a very different style. This writer argues for the sake of arguing, and, sometimes too, has very little to say. I maintain also, that the first two acts of the opera are very good, and above the usual flight of Quinault: my mother agrees with me in this; but she intends to give you her opinion herself. Only let us know what you find fault with in it; we will answer for these first two acts; as for the assembly of the rivers, I give it up.

LETTER CCCLXXXV.

TO THE SAME.—MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ DICTATES: HER SON WRITES.

The Rocks, Monday, Feb. 3, 1676.

Guess, my dear child, what it is that comes the quickest, and goes off the slowest; that brings you the near-

est to health, and removes you the farthest from it; that throws you into the most agreeable situation imaginable, and at the same time hinders you from enjoying it; that flatters you with the most pleasing hopes, and keeps you the longest from the accomplishment of them. Cannot you guess? Do you give it up? Why, it is the rheumatism. I have had it these three and twenty days; since the fourteenth day, I have been free from fever and pain: and in this delightful situation, thinking myself strong enough to walk, which is the summit of my wishes; I find myself swelled all over, feet, legs, hands, arms; and this swelling, which they call my cure, and in reality is so, is the sole occasion of my present vexation; were I good for any thing, I might gain myself some credit by it. However, I believe the enemy is conquered, and that in two days I shall be able to walk. Larméchin gives me great hope of this. I every day receive letters from our friends at Paris, congratulating me on my recovery. I have taken M. de Lorme's opening powders, which have been of great service to me; I am going to take them again; they are a never-failing remedy in these cases. After this attack, I am promised an eternal succession of health. God grant it. My first step will be to return to Paris; I desire you, therefore, my dear, to calm all your fears: you see what a faithful account we have given you of the affair; let that make you easy.

Before this packet is sealed up, I shall venture to ask my great hand if it will please to write a line to you; I am afraid it will not comply; but I do not know; perhaps in two hours it may.

Adieu, my dear and best-beloved child; let me beg you to have a reverential awe of the thing called rheumatism; this, methinks, is the most important business I

have to recommend to you at present. The *frater* has been railing at you this week past for speaking against M. de Lorme's powders when you were at Paris.

FROM M. DE SÉVIGNÉ.

Had my mother yielded to the regimen prescribed her by that honest man, and taken some of his powders once a month, as he wished her to do, she would not have had this disorder, which is wholly owing to repletion of humours: but it was killing her to advise her to try a single dose; and yet, after all, this dreadful medicine, that makes people shudder at its very name, is composed of antimony, which is an emetic; and operates as gently, and with as much safety, as a glass of any of the medicinal waters, without the least griping or pain, and has no other effect than that of making the head light, and capacitating it for making verses, if you choose to attempt it: but, no, it must not be taken: "Are you mad, brother, to think of giving my mother antimony? she wants nothing but a little dieting, and a cooling medicine occasionally:" this was your ladyship's strain. Your servant, my little sister; I am quite angry, when I think that we might have saved our mother this terrible disorder, by prevailing on her to have taken this powder, which is the most speedy restorative in the world, whatever she may be pleased to say against it in her impatience.

"Are you fools, children," says my mother, "to think, that a disease is to be put out of its course? Must not the will of God be done? Is it not our duty to submit?" This is talking like a very good Christian; but still, I say, give me de Lorme's powders.

LETTER CCCLXXXVI.

TO THE SAME.—MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ DICTATES; HER SON WRITES.

The Rocks, Sunday, February 9, 1676.

THIS is just what we feared and foresaw; you are tormented with uneasiness when I am getting well. I very much dreaded the effect which the news of my being ill would have on you; knowing you as I do: but you now see what it has proved; there never was the least danger. We never intended to deceive you from the beginning; I told you I had a stiff neck, and I thought it was nothing more: but the next morning it declared itself the rheumatism in form: that is to say, one of the most painful and tiresome disorders in the world; and now that I am cured, and can walk about my room, and have been at mass, I am covered with poultices. I guess with what impatience you waited for our second letter, and I cannot sufficiently express my obligations to M. de Roquesante for partaking of your uneasiness. You are all heroes in friendship, of whom I have the highest opinion. I thank the dear children for thanking God so heartily for my recovery, and I promise M. de Grignan two lines in my own hand, as soon as I have got rid of my poultices. I desire you will return my thanks to all those who have been so particular in their inquiries after me; for though I am sensible it is on your account, it cannot fail to be highly gratifying to me. I am in great fear lest your brother should be obliged to leave me; all his letters from Paris are filled with reviews, brigades, and war.

I entreat you to be careful of your health: you know you cannot give me a stronger proof of your friendship. Adieu, my dearest child, I embrace you most tenderly. The *frater* wishes to write a line to M. de Grignan.

M. DE SÉVIGNÉ TO M. DE GRIGNAN.

Though my sister may have taken the greatest care imaginable to conceal from you my mother's situation, you may depend on it, my dearest brother, that I should have been very cautious how I wrote to her, had we perceived any thing of danger in the case; but happily we had only the vexation of seeing her racked with excruciating pains, without the least ground for apprehension. This you might easily perceive by our letters, which were calculated to make you quite easy on that head. I hope you are persuaded, my dear brother, that I should not have been wanting in my duty on this occasion. My sister has too strong a hold of my heart for me ever to forget her. At present we have the satisfaction of witnessing an hourly change for the better, in my mother's health; and I am less concerned at her illness, as I hope it may be a means of inducing her to take more care of herself for the future, finding herself mortal; and as I am indebted to it for your obliging and friendly letter. Believe me, sir, no one can honour you more sincerely than myself, or feel for you greater esteem and affection.

THE SAME, TO MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

And now, a word for you, my dear sister, to inform you of what you desired to know by the first post, which, however, could not be done, unless we had been

like my uncle de Chalons's * valet, who wrote word that his master had had a quartan ague ever since yesterday morning. You were informed of all there was to be informed of, and I think you ought rather to return us thanks, than scold us, for in that you do us great injustice.

We have the abbé de Chavigni for our bishop of Rennes †: this you will suppose does not greatly displease us, laying aside his dislike to Montagne. I embrace you a thousand times, my dearest sister, and desire you to make M. de Grignan my farther respects: I have at length seen a letter from him to another person besides yourself, which I shall preserve very carefully.

LETTER CCCLXXXVII.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Wednesday, Feb. 12, 1676.

My dear child, I am now wholly out of the question of anxiety. I am quite well: that is to say, as well as a person can be at the skirts of the rheumatism; for the swellings are so long in going away, that there would be no keeping our patience, if it were not that the situation we have just quitted, makes the present seem a heavenly one in comparison. Is it true that the chevalier has been in the same dilemma? I cannot conceive how the *petit glorieux* can bear a disorder, that begins to exercise its power over its captive by tying him hand and foot. It is said too, that cardinal de Bouillon has had his share of this little humiliation:

* N. de Neufchaise, bishop of Chalons.

† This was a false report.

oh, noble disorder! it does well, to let the courtiers feel its sting. My son is gone to Vitré on some business: I have, therefore, conferred the post of secretary on the little person whom I have so often mentioned to you, and who desires most respectfully to kiss your hands. I enclose a letter which the good princess has just sent me for you. I am very much pleased at this mark of her politeness and friendship. I am under no concern about the manner in which you will answer it.

LETTER CCCLXXXVIII.

TO THE SAME.—MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ DICTATES: HER SON WRITES.

The Rocks, Sunday, Feb. 16, 1676.

SINCE you decide the question, that it is better to be without the writing of a person that we love, than to see them write badly; I think I will not propose any thing of the kind to my poor swelled hand to-day, but entreat you, by proxy, to banish all uneasiness from your mind. My son made me walk out a little yesterday, in the finest weather imaginable; I found myself greatly strengthened by it, and if my swellings would but leave me, I should be in perfect health. As I dearly love to be made much of, I am not displeased at your pitying, and joining with me in the persuasion, that the rheumatism, as I have had it, is the most cruel and tormenting pain a person can endure. The *frater* has been an excellent nurse to me; he is equally useful in sickness and in health. I placed the greatest reliance on all he said; he commiserated all my sufferings, and has not failed in any thing he promised me; no, not so much as in yesterday's walk, which has done me

a great deal of good. Larmèrchin, on his part, constantly attended me for upwards of five weeks: in short, I do not know what I should have done without these two good personages. If you want any more anecdotes relating to the rheumatism, inquire of poor Marignane, whom I pity from my heart, for she is in the very situation from which I am just recovering. Do not imagine that the head-dress and the toupée, that you reproach me with, have lately been in fashion. I have been seriously ill for the first time in my life, and my first attempt has been a master-piece. I now wait for more strength, and shall then set out for Paris, whither, to my great regret, my poor boy must go before me. I am greatly affected with the devotion observed at Arles, but I fancy the coadjutor never suffers his to carry him such lengths: we are eager to learn from you the consequences of this extraordinary zeal.

I am very glad you have had a little insight into M. de Pomponne's and his sister-in-law's proceedings, and that you have adopted their plans, without letting it be perceived at Paris: they are friends on whom we may safely rely. Adieu, my dear child, I think this is all I have to say to you. If it were not for my being a little anxious about you and your health, I should be in an enviable situation. But it is not for wretched mortals to taste happiness unalloyed.

LETTER CCCLXXXIX.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Ash-Wednesday,
Feb. 19, 1676.

I HOPE, my dear, you passed your carnival better than I did; I see nothing to have prevented your doing it: you have long had reason to be out of pain on the subject of my health. I am a little discomposed by it at present, indeed, for the insupportable tediousness of a rheumatic attack is beyond conception; now a pain in one hand, then a twitch in t'other, as if to remind you of the beginning of the fit: in short, it is no easy matter to recover afterwards perfect health; but I set very seriously about it, and there is no fear of my relapsing, through my own fault, for I am afraid of my own shadow; so much so, that they make a perfect jest of me. I am accordingly what you may call a very disagreeable companion. Add to this that the good abbé is not very well: he has a pain in one of his knees, with depression of spirits towards the evening, that I do not at all like.

Madame de Marbeuf came from Rennes to see me, but I sent her to the princess to spend her carnival; I expect them both here to see me. My son has passed two or three days there. He is to leave us in five or six; this will be a real loss to me, but he cannot possibly delay his departure: I shall think of nothing but following him as soon as possible. But, my dear child, what is to cure me of the uneasiness I suffer on your account? this is extreme indeed, and I every day pray

to be relieved from it. I do not know when my letters will be bearable again; at present they are so dull and full of myself, that I have not patience to hear them read; your taste is too good not to make you think the same, and so I will conclude immediately; the little girl * also laughs at me. I expect your letters as the only joy of my heart. It is a pleasure to me to enter into all you write, and to extricate myself from what I write myself. Adieu, my dearest and ever lovely child, you know how much I am yours: preserve for me a friendship so tender and so dear. I embrace M. de Grignan and the little ones. How does poor Marignane? methinks the rheumatism makes us neighbours. I send you a dozen remembrances to distribute as you think proper; but there is one for Roquesante, which must never be confounded with the rest.

LETTER CCCXC.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, Feb. 23, 1676.

You are brought to bed at the end of eight months, my dear child: what a happiness you are so well! but what a pity it will be to lose your little boy! You, who are so prudent, and apt to condemn others for want of care, must take it in your head to wash your feet! when you had carried the good work on so well, and for so long a time, how could you think of risking it, and your life into the bargain? but after all, God be praised, my child, that you have got so well over it; you wanted no help. You may imagine with what impatience I wait for a second packet, to hear more particularly of

* The young lady who was writing for madame de Sévigné.

your health, and how full my head will be of this lying-in and all its circumstances. I thank you for your three lines, and you, my dear count, for the trouble you took in giving me so speedy and accurate an account. You know what the health of your dear wife is to me: but you let her write too much. And so it was this same washing of the feet, it seems, that brought on the labour. I cannot get over the loss of the poor infant, and I stand in need of all your christian reflections to support me; for, say as you please, you will never be able to save its life at eight months. I should have been afraid her premature labour had been occasioned by the alarm she was under on account of my illness, had I not known there was a fortnight's interval. However, God be praised a thousand and a thousand times, since my dear countess is well. My life hangs upon her health, therefore let me recommend it to your particular care, my dear count, and I accept very heartily of the rendezvous at Grignan.

LETTER CCCXCI.

M. DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, Feb. 23, 1676.

Come on, sister, come on, give us some of your sage advice for the management of health, and then we will answer you out of the Bible, "Physician, heal thyself." I take no small advantage over you now I think, for by my good management, simple as I am, our people have taken the field. In a word, my mother is as well as possible: yesterday, for the first time, she took de Lorme's powders, which did her great service; she

walks out in fine weather; I gave her my advice, and she follows it: she finds the benefit of so doing, for with us people do not lie-in at the end of eight months! After this, I fancy she will trust to me in what relates to her health, and have a proper contempt for your little capacity, that suffered you to wash your feet for two hours together, when you were eight months with child: we forgive you, however, in consideration of your being tolerably well, and of the letters which we have received from you, M. de Grignan, and the little Dague, which take away all our uneasiness.

Cautious as you were in giving us this intelligence, my mother was affected with it in a degree that alarmed us a good deal. We were at cards when the packet was brought; she desired du Plessis, who sat looking on, to open it. The first letter she saw was that of La Dague to me. When she read the word *delivered*, which happened to be the first that presented itself on the outside fold, my mother gave a great cry, without staying for the rest of the contents, which were as happy as could be wished, and immediately relieved us from any inquietude. She was, however, very much agitated, but this proceeded merely from the weakness which the disorder has left upon her spirits: indeed there was some reason to be alarmed at first, but when we saw La Dague's drollery, all our anxiety vanished. But my mother still wanted to see your own handwriting.

I beg M. de Grignan to accept my congratulations on your health, and my sincere wishes for the life of his son: he will not doubt my sincerity, if he will only do me the honour to judge of me by himself, and recollect how far short this falls of the tears he favoured me with about eighteen months ago, upon a certain piece of news from the camp: as to La Dague, I shall say

nothing to her at present; I shall wait for an opportunity of revenge, till I can hide myself on the stair-case at Grignan, where the wind has such a fine effect.

I embrace you a thousand times, my dearest sister. There is no danger to-day, for it is a long time since I put any powder in my hair.

LETTER CCCXCII.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, Feb. 26, 1676.

I WAIT with the utmost impatience, my dear child, for my Friday's letters: I am still in need of that pleasing confirmation of a health so dear and precious to me: I embrace you tenderly, and my little secretary shall tell you the rest.

I make no farther mention of my health, as it is now perfectly established, with the exception of my hands, which are still swelled. Could I write with my feet, you should soon have long letters from me: in the mean time, laying aside all thoughts of sickness, I am wholly taken up with the news I received from Provence, which is of importance enough to arrest my attention, but, provided you still continue in good health, I have reason to be thankful. The weather is unusually fine, and contributes greatly to recruit my strength, and hasten my return to Paris.

I am told that the prince has excused himself from serving the ensuing campaign: I think he is perfectly right. M. de Lorges is at length a marshal of France: do you not wonder, when you reflect how easily he might have been advanced to this honour six or seven

months ago? The letters I receive are filled with nothing but the return of M. and madame de Schomberg; I think he will go to Germany. Every body fancies I am able to ride out now. I have heard of your safe delivery. It is certainly a great step towards recovery to have the mind at ease: however, I am in hopes of having mine still more so, after another packet of letters from you.

Adieu, my dearest, my best-beloved: my son is going to Paris, in order to put the finishing stroke to a miraculous affair that La Garde has entered into with young Viriville, relative to the purchase of our guidonage. I love La Garde sincerely, and request you to do the same, and also to write to him in return for the obligations I owe him. The good Marbeuf is here, and is an inexpressible comfort to me.

LETTER CCCXCIII.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, March 1, 1676.

Let me tell you, my child, how fortunate and happy I am. I fully expected letters from you on Friday, as they never fail me on that day: I had been a whole week in painful expectation: the packet came, I opened it, but found no letter from you: I thought I should have fainted, not having yet sufficient strength to support such an attack. Alas! what would have become of my recovering health, with such an anxiety as this to endure? how could I have passed the tedious moments till Monday? But see what services d'Hacqueville is destined to render me! for in doing a thing that might have been perfectly useless if I had received your

letters as usual, he restored me to life and health by sending me the letter he had received from Davoneau of the 19th February, the tenth day after your confinement, written at your request, and giving an account of yours and your child's perfect health. What comfort was this in a moment! how instantaneously did I pass from the extremes of grief and trouble, to a well-founded and rational tranquillity! I expect my wandering packet next Monday; ah! cruel packet, to wander the day of all others that I most earnestly wished for you! but that charming letter of the 19th has set my heart at ease, and I shall now return to the care of my health, which I had begun to abandon. I am well, but my poor hand is tired, and I must now have recourse to my little secretary.

To return to d'Hacqueville. I will henceforward take care how I condemn him for his excessive carefulness, since it has been so beneficial to me. I must own that had I received my two letters as regularly as I ought, I should have laughed heartily at this over-precaution, as I do when he sends me news of Britany; but no more laughing since the last unspeakable satisfaction which he has afforded me.

My son is gone, and we are solitary enough without him. The little girl and I sit together and read, and write, and say our prayers. I am carried out in my chair into the park, which is delightfully pleasant this fine weather, and strengthens me exceedingly. I have had a great many pretty alterations made in it, which I shall not much enjoy this year, for my face is turned towards Paris; my son is there already, about the affair of the guidonage. The good princess visits me sometimes, and seems to take great interest in your health. La Marbeuf is gone away; she was a great comfort and

assistance to me, in that amiable disorder of mine, the rheumatism. Adieu, my beloved child. I heartily thank M. Davoneau for his letter of the 19th February.

LETTER * CCCXCIV.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO THE COUNT DE BUSSY.

The Rocks, March 1, 1676.

WHAT must you have thought of me, my dear cousin, for having failed to answer your excellent letter, which I received more than six weeks ago? The reason is this: it is seven weeks to-day that my robust health was attacked by an inhuman rheumatism, which has not yet left me; for my hands are still swelled, and I cannot write. I had a constant fever for three weeks. Your letter was read to me, and your arguments appeared very just; but my head was so confused with the delirium occasioned by my fever, that it was impossible for me to answer it. All I know is that I sent your letter to my daughter, and that I have thought of you a thousand times since I have been ill. This was not a trifle, considering how much I was occupied with myself. It is a strange noviciate for one who has passed her life, like me, in perfect health. This illness has delayed my return to Paris, where I shall go, however, as soon as I have regained my strength.

M. de Lorges has been created marshal of France. I have a thousand things to say to you; and I would willingly say them, if I were not obliged to employ an amanuensis. But the account of my illness must suffice, my dear cousin, for to-day. I embrace madame de Coligni with all my heart; and entreat her not to bring forth an eight months' child, as my daughter has

done. She is well; but she will perhaps lose her little boy, and that is a pity. My dear cousin, adieu.

LETTER CCCXCV.

MADAME DE SÉVIGNÉ TO MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

The Rocks, Wednesday, March 4, 1676.

At length, my dear, I have received the two letters I so earnestly expected and desired. I am delighted to hear of your health, but do not fatigue yourself so early with too much writing. I thank M. de Grignan and Montgobert for having prevented you from doing it: besides I do not deserve it, for I am still without hands. I only request an answer for the princess, and two lines for myself. I am really wearied out with this tedious disorder, and shocked at the thoughts of returning lame to Paris. I have put my physician here upon his mettle, and have likewise written to my son to consult some able person of the faculty in Paris, to know if any thing can be done to hasten a cure, after suffering for two months continually. Let me know how Marignane does, and whether she labours under the same inconvenience with myself. I am charmed to hear the little boy is well; but I dare not set my heart too much upon him, because I dare not hope that you should be deceived in your conjectures, knowing you to be more infallible than the pope himself: I build all my expectations, therefore, on the old women's tales that were told you at Aix: I think some of them very droll, and the rarity of nine months' children made me laugh very heartily.

TO MONSIEUR DE GRIGNAN.

You say, my dear count, that my daughter cannot lie-in too often, because she does it so well. Good God! is she not always lying-in? But let me tell you, sir, that unless from compassion and affection you give her a little rest, you will entirely destroy her, and that would be a pity. Let me desire you to reflect seriously on what I say to you; which, believe me, is no gossip's tale.

TO MADAME DE GRIGNAN.

I now return to you, my dearest. I suppose you are delighted to see the coadjutor and La Garde. Is not the latter to return to court? We shall see how the affair he brought forward will turn out: we are afraid it is rather too good to succeed. I hear from Paris that the chevalier is very much displeased at not being made brigadier; he is in the right; after his conduct last year*, he certainly deserves to be promoted. Adieu, my dearest child, the good abbé embraces you, and my little secretary kisses your left hand. My hand still continues as usual; but you are well, and then I am so too.

LETTER CCCXCVI.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, March 8, 1676.

You may indeed believe, my child, that if my hand could write to any one, it would be to you; but it is in

* At the battle of Altenheim.

vain to propose it: it will not obey me. This tedious privation afflicts me. I have not written a line to Paris, except to d'Hacqueville the other day, to thank him for Davoneau's letter, with which I was transported with joy; and this was on your account, for I think of no one else at present. I reserve my scrawl entirely for you, and notwithstanding your decision of the question, I believe you had rather see that than none at all: the rest therefore must excuse me:

Car je n'ai qu'un filet de voix,
Et ne chante que pour Sylvie *.

But here comes my pretty little secretary very opportunely to relieve my trembling hand.

You are very good, my child, in offering to come and spend the summer with me; I firmly believe you would do as you say, and were it not for the little uneasiness I still suffer, I should very contentedly see our good abbé set out by himself, a fortnight hence, and remain in this delightful desert, with so sweet a companion the whole summer; but M. de Mirepoix's affair decides me, and I must now hobble to Paris. When I was at the worst, I said no one was more likely than yourself, if you knew how ill I was, to come and surprise me some morning at the foot of my bed. You see, my dear, what an opinion I have of your affection, and what confidence I repose in you.

I assure you, my dear, I am so much delighted with the good state of your health, that it encourages me to endeavour to perfect mine; but for this pleasing stimulus, I should have been wholly indifferent about it: but I foresee so many things which may give me the pleasure of seeing, and of serving you, that I do not

* For I have but a weak voice, and I sing only for Sylvia.

hesitate to bestow all my attention on the re-establishment of my health. I am interested in the life of the little boy: I should be very sorry if he were to die. You have given me a charming picture of Vardes; you want no assistant, for your pencil is not inferior to Mignard's. I should have thought from his (Vardes) confusion, that he was going to be put upon the wheel; but I now see, as no one was present but you, that he owed the honour of this embarrassment to his being eleven years in the country. I think cardinal de Bonzi has no reason to complain, if that be all that is said of him. I am sorry the good Sanes is dead; it was a pleasure to see him play at piquet, as coldly and as drily as if he had been really in his coffin.

I am very desirous that you should write to the good princess; I am afraid you did not sufficiently enter into the friendliness of her letters. Let me know how you are after your sitting up: is your complexion uninjured? I love to hear about your person: my face within this fortnight is the same as ever it was; I am very little fallen away, and I walk upon my *hind feet* like other people. I eat with an appetite, but have bid adieu to suppers for ever; so that excepting my swelled hands, a few flying pains that come and go, and serve to remind me of my dear rheumatism, I am no longer an object worthy of your solicitude. Feel no more anxiety then upon my account, I conjure you, and be assured, that in whatever state I may be, and however I may have been, your remembrance and your love are my sole occupations.

I have just received a letter from the cardinal, who assures me that he is much better; his health is very dear to me. I have likewise received a thousand congratulations from the dear Grignans. The chevalier had every reason to expect promotion, after his conver-

sation with the king. Adieu, my dearest; be under no apprehension of a relapse on my part. My excessive carelessness with respect to my health is changed to the greatest timidity. Do you not pity poor Lauzun for not being able to work at his hole * any longer? Do you not think he will dash his brains out against the wall? I am still as much delighted as ever with the Moral Essays, and you were mistaken in supposing that the sentiments of a certain person would make me alter mine. The treatise on tempting God, presses us a little to do for our salvation what we often do out of self-love. Corbinelli says, "that our friends are Jesuits in this respect." I think the coadjutor and you are admirable on this subject: if you said your prayers every day, you would be perfect saints; but you will not; and this is an example of that stubborn will, which St. Augustine describes so well in his Confessions. I admire, my dear, how far my love of talking has carried me.

LETTER CCCXCVII.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, March 11, 1676.

I use a wash for my hands, which old de Lorme has recommended me; it has given me hopes, and that is all; and I pity Lauzun for being deprived of the pleasure of making a hole in the wall. In short, my child, I may say I am well. I took the precaution of being careful of my feet, and it is fortunate I did, for they have saved my life: I am every day in my woods,

* M. de Lauzun was discovered attempting to make a hole in the wall of the room where he was confined at Pignerol.

where there is now a perfect summer; but about five o'clock, I am obliged to leave them, at which I could almost cry: it is a mortification I cannot easily brook. I am in hopes of setting out next week: and if I had not courage enough to go, the abbé would certainly go without me. I have heard no news yet from my son about his affairs: he has thought of nothing but de Lorme, and my health. Is he not a good creature? I expect that your letters next Friday will be accompanied with an answer for the princess.

One of the greatest pleasures I enjoy is that of hearing from you: methinks I can never know enough of what relates to you; but you always cut short the subject when you are speaking of yourself, which is not the way to treat those who love you so well. Send me word if the little girl is at Saint Marie: though my maternal love be of the first magnitude, I do not forget the pigeons. I have a whole cart-load of news from Paris; one sends me a wonderful prophecy of Nostradamus; another a story of a surprising battle of birds in the air, which, after having continued for some time, left two and twenty thousand dead upon the place. "When the sky falls we shall have larks in plenty." Of all this, we do not believe a single syllable here.

Adieu, my dearest child. Be assured, that of all the hearts over which you reign, your empire is established in none so firmly as in mine.

LETTER CCCXCVIII.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Sunday, March 15, 1676.

I AM grieved at the uneasiness I eternally occasion you: how many unnecessary pains do we suffer in absence!

our joy and our sorrow are always misplaced. Fear not, my child, that I shall employ my hands improperly; I only write to you, and even now I can proceed no farther. Here comes my little amanuensis.

I still continue de Lorme's wash, but the cure goes on so slowly, that I have much more hope from the fine weather, than from all the herbs in creation. In other respects, I find myself so well, that I am resolved to set out next Saturday for Paris, where there are a thousand things waiting my presence; the affair of Mirepoix in particular. I will not retrace all I have suffered during my illness, though it seems to me impossible to experience more acute pain. I endeavoured to be patient, but I could not help sometimes crying out. Let us drop the subject, my dear child: I am now well, and let my present timidity be an earnest of my future wisdom. You would laugh to see what a chicken-hearted creature I am become: looking at my watch every now and then, and thinking five o'clock a very late hour. I am really surprised at the little one's continuing in such good health; it will be a miracle if he can be reared.

What you say of Vardes is excellent: I know how he dreads your epigrams; it is too much to have both you, and his own conscience, against him at once. I am in hopes the *frater's* affair will terminate to our wishes. He will get the ensigncy for 11,000 francs: I do not see how he could have done better, for M. de Virville will be always ready to take the situation off his hands whenever he is weary of it. I felt very keenly the mortification of the chevalier (de Grignan), and think with you, that there were a thousand reasons for complying with his request. The duke de Sault, after a long conversation with the King, has quitted the

service, and will attend his majesty as a volunteer. You see we have not a few malcontents.

I could have wished, my dear, you had not been so remiss in answering the good princess's letter, but had given her an earlier proof of your sense of the gratitude I owe her. You are in childbed, it is true, and I have made the most of so reasonable an excuse. I am delighted you are well, and fat, or, in another word, handsome. Yesterday I took M. de Lorme's powder again; it is an admirable medicine: he may well call it *le bon pain* (good bread), for it does every thing I could wish; and neither heats nor disorders me at all. I am now perfectly reconciled to it: I fancy this last dose will complete my cure. In this country, they never bleed in rheumatisms: God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb; of all the disorders that could have befallen me, I have had the least dangerous, but the most painful one, and the most calculated to correct my pride, and make me humble: for I would now run a thousand miles to avoid the pain I endured; but you, my dear, notwithstanding you have suffered so much, possess much greater courage and fortitude than I do: may your noble soul long remain in union with your lovely body!

LETTER CCCXCVIII.

TO THE SAME.

The Rocks, Wednesday, March 18, 1676.

I AM resolved not to strain my hand, and my little secretary is coming to my aid.

In the first place, my dear child, I have to inform you, that when I no longer knew what to do with my hands, Providence sent M. de Villebrune to me, who is

an excellent physician; he advised me to excite perspiration in them, by holding them over the steam of several curious herbs; I am persuaded this is the best remedy I have yet tried, and that this transpiration must be very efficacious. I shall not set out till Tuesday, on account of the equinox, which Villebrune advised me to pass here; in short, Villebrune is all in all with me now. I fancy the good princess will pay a visit to Madame, on the death of M. de Valois. My son's business is not yet finished.

The marriage of M. de Lorges appears to me very advantageous: I am delighted with the father-in-law's good taste. But what say you to madame de la Baume, who has obliged the king to send an exempt to take mademoiselle de la Trivolière from under her father and mother's care, and placed her with one of her sisters-in-law at Lyons? She is no doubt trying to make a match between her and her son *. It is rather odd to tell you the news of Lyons, but I could not help mentioning this affair to you. I have not seen Fléchier's funeral oration yet; is it possible it can equal M. de Tulle's? I would cite upon this a verse of Tasso, if I could recollect it.

Adieu, my dearest child, our fine weather continues. I should regret leaving the Rocks if I were not an invalid; but as I am in continual dread of the dews, and must therefore pass the fine summer-evenings in my chamber, the long days would tire me to death, and so I shall take flight. Good health is necessary to bear solitude and a country life.

I embrace you, my dear count; I am so weary of this wretched scrawl of mine, that were it not for

* Camille de la Baume d'Hostun, count de Tallard, afterwards marshal of France, and duke d'Hostun, married Marie Catharine de Grolée de Virieu-le-Thivolière, as madame de Sévigné predicted.

alarming you all, I would not write another stroke till my hands were perfectly well. Such a tedious recovery is very mortifying to one whom you know to be not overburthened with patience; but we must submit to the will of God. I am rightly served; I was vain of my own strength; this has taught me how weak I am. Forgive me, my dear child, for always talking of myself, and my complaints; I promise you to be better company when I get to Paris; and that is one reason why I wish to be there, that I may lose the remembrance of my past sufferings. The Rocks is the place of all others to nourish melancholy reflections. But I shall hope to see you some day in this *paterno nido* *.

* Parental nest.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.

Printed by S. Hamilton, Weybridge.

00047670

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 02 January, 2016